

ANNOUNCER: FUNDING FOR  
"COUNTRY MUSIC" WAS PROVIDED

BY THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS

OF THE BETTER ANGELS SOCIETY:

THE BLAVATNIK FAMILY FOUNDATION,  
THE SCHWARTZ/REISMAN FOUNDATION,  
THE PFEIL FOUNDATION,

DIANE AND HAL BRIERLEY,  
JOHN AND CATHERINE DEBS,

THE FULLERTON FAMILY  
CHARITABLE FUND,

BY THE PERRY AND DONNA  
GOLKIN FAMILY FOUNDATION,

JAY ALIX AND UNA JACKMAN,

MERCEDES T. BASS,

AND FRED AND DONNA SEIGEL

AND BY THESE ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.

[BOB WILLIS AND HIS TEXAS  
PLAYBOYS' "NEW SAN ANTONIO  
ROSE" PLAYING]

WILLIS:  
OH, TEAR IT DOWN, MR. MAN.

TEAR IT DOWN NOW.

MAJOR FUNDING WAS PROVIDED  
BY: THE ANNENBERG FOUNDATION;

BY THE ARTHUR VINING DAVIS  
FOUNDATIONS,

DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING  
AMERICA'S FUTURE

THROUGH EDUCATION;

BY BELMONT UNIVERSITY,  
WHERE STUDENTS CAN STUDY

MUSIC AND MUSIC BUSINESS  
IN THE HEART OF MUSIC CITY;

BY THE SOUNDTRACK OF AMERICA--  
MADE IN TENNESSEE--

TRAVEL INFORMATION  
AT TNVACATION.COM;

BY THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT  
OF NASHVILLE

AND DAVIDSON COUNTY;

BY ROSALIND P. WALTER;

BY THE CORPORATION  
FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING;

AND BY VIEWERS LIKE YOU.

THANK YOU.

â HEADING DOWN SOUTH  
TO THE LAND OF THE PINE â

â THUMBING MY WAY INTO  
NORTH CAROLINE â

â STARING UP THE ROAD,  
PRAY TO GOD I SEE HEADLIGHTS â

â SO, ROCK ME, MAMA,  
LIKE A WAGON WHEEL â

â ROCK ME, MAMA,  
ANY WAY YOU FEEL â

â HEY, MAMA, ROCK ME

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

HANK WILLIAMS:  
â WHEN YOU ARE SAD AND LONELY

â AND HAVE NO PLACE TO GO

â COME TO SEE ME, BABY,  
AND BRING ALONG SOME DOUGH â

â AND WE'LL GO HONKY TONKIN',  
HONKY TONKIN' â

â HONKY TONKIN'...

MAN: TWO THINGS--  
BEER AND DANCING.

WELL, AS WE LIKE  
TO SAY ABOUT DANCING,

IF YOU DANCE, YOU GOT A CHANCE.  
[LAUGHS]

THEY CALLED THEM "HONKY-TONKS,"

ROAD HOUSES, ICE HOUSES,  
"SKULL ORCHARDS."

[LAUGHS]  
SKULL ORCHARD. UH.

WELL, THAT'S JUST A WAY  
OF DESCRIBING A...

A NIGHTCLUB THAT HAS  
REGULAR FIGHTS IN IT, YOU KNOW?

SOMEBODY'S ALWAYS GETTING  
POPPED IN THE SKULL.

BUT THERE LITERALLY WERE PLACES  
WHERE THEY'D PUT CHICKEN WIRE

OVER THE FRONT OF THE STAGE  
TO KEEP PEOPLE

FROM GETTING HIT  
WITH BEER BOTTLES.

WILLIAMS: "WHEN  
YOU AND YOUR BABY..."

MAN: IN THE HEYDAY  
OF HONKY-TONK MUSIC,

THE BEER WAS FLOWING,  
THE CIGARETTES WERE LIT.

COUPLES WERE DANCING.  
THEY'D RUB

STOMACH TO STOMACH,  
CHEEK TO CHEEK.

WILLIAMS: "HONKY-TONKIN',  
HONKY-TONKIN', HONEY, BABY"

"WE'LL GO HONKY-TONKIN'  
AROUND THIS TOWN"

BENSON: ALCOHOL  
AND MEN AND WOMEN TOGETHER

CREATE VIOLENCE, FIGHTS.

WHEN THERE'S A FIGHT,

YOU DON'T STOP PLAYING.

IT'S THE ONE RULE.

KEEP PLAYING.

THE OTHER THING IS,  
AND I'VE HAD TO,

IS A GUITAR IS A GREAT WEAPON.

[LAUGHS] YOU KNOW?

USUALLY, SOMEONE  
WOULD GET OUT OF HAND

AND MAKE A PASS  
AT THE WRONG WOMAN.

LINES WERE CROSSED,  
PROPRIETY BLURRED.

MUSIC GOOD.

YOU KNOW, THE DANCING GOOD.

FIGHTS WOULD BREAK OUT,  
LIPS WOULD BE BUSTED.

BLOOD WOULD BE FLOWING,  
AND THEN THEY'D MAKE UP

AND GO BACK TO DANCE  
AND SMOKE SOME MORE CIGARETTES

AND DRINK SOME MORE WHISKEY.

GREAT CULTURE.

WILLIAMS: 'a HONKY-TONKIN'

'a HONEY, BABY, WE GOING  
HONKY-TONKIN' 'a

'a AROUND THIS TOWN

MAN: 'a HEY, THERE,  
TURN IT LOOSE! 'a

MAN: AFTER THE WAR, EVERYBODY  
CAME HOME SUPER CHARGED.

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WENT  
WITH THAT WAS AN ELECTRICITY

AND A BIT OF AN ENERGY

THAT CALLED FOR SOMETHING  
BESIDES FIDDLE TUNES.

ALL OF A SUDDEN, IT WAS ABOUT  
STOMPING AND DANCING.

THAT CALLED FOR DRUMS  
AND THAT CALLED FOR

TWANGING GUITARS AND THIS...  
A STEEL GUITAR

THAT WOULD CUT THROUGH THE NOISE

AND GET ABOVE THE NOISE  
OF THE CROWD AND THE FIGHTS,

AND THE HOOPING  
AND THE HOLLERING

AS THE NIGHT WENT ON.

IT ALWAYS GETS LOUDER  
AT A HONKY-TONK

AND MORE RAMBUNCTIOUS.

AS YOU MOVE TOWARD MIDNIGHT,  
THE EDGE MOVES CLOSER TO YOU.

SO, YOU NEED  
AN EDGY SOUND, YOU KNOW,

THAT CUTS THROUGH THAT.

AND ELECTRICITY  
WAS YOUR FRIEND.

NARRATOR: IN THE LATE 1940s  
AND EARLY FIFTIES,

AMERICANS FOUND THEMSELVES  
LIVING IN A WORLD

THAT COULD END AT ANY MOMENT,  
AND EVERYTHING WAS CHANGING--

IN SCIENCE, IN THE ECONOMY,

IN RACE RELATIONS,

IN ART, IN LITERATURE,  
AND IN MUSIC.

COUNTRY MUSIC  
ADAPTED TO THE TIMES.

MEN HAD BEEN TO WAR;  
WOMEN HAD BEEN TO WORK;

THE DIVORCE RATE WAS  
HITTING RECORD LEVELS.

SONGS THAT DEALT OPENLY  
ABOUT CHEATING AND DRINKING--

TOPICS ONCE CONSIDERED BEYOND  
THE PALE OF RESPECTABILITY--

BECAME AS POPULAR AS SONGS  
WITH MORE TRADITIONAL THEMES

LIKE MOTHER OR A SENTIMENTAL  
LONGING FOR HOME.

AND THE NEW SONGS  
HAD A NEW SOUND--

A PIERCING ELECTRIC GUITAR,  
A DRIVING DRUM BEAT,

INSISTENT BASS, AND A VOICE  
THAT DELIVERED LYRICS

ABOUT BOTH GOOD TIMES  
AND HEARTBREAK

WITH AN EMOTIONAL URGENCY.

THE NEW SOUND  
HAD SPRUNG UP

IN DARKENED TAVERNS  
AND BARROOMS

AROUND THE OIL FIELDS  
OF TEXAS AND OKLAHOMA,

HAD SPREAD TO CALIFORNIA  
AND THEN TO

THE INDUSTRIAL CITIES  
OF THE NORTH.

THE BEER HALLS WERE TOO NOISY

FOR MUSICIANS PLAYING  
ACOUSTIC INSTRUMENTS

AND TOO SMALL FOR  
THE BIG DANCE BANDS

THAT PLAYED WESTERN SWING.

I THINK  
THE HONKY-TONK MUSIC, UM,

CAME FROM WESTERN SWING,  
AND IT JUST PARED IT DOWN.

BOB WILLIS HAD A BIG BAND,  
BIG AS HE COULD AFFORD OR WANT.

HONKY-TONKS WERE SMALL BANDS,

AND IT WAS THE SAME THING  
THAT HAPPENED

WITH THE BIG BANDS, YOU KNOW.

YOU WENT FROM 24 PEOPLE  
DOWN TO 8 PEOPLE.

IT WAS A SINGLE FIDDLE  
INSTEAD OF 3 FIDDLES.

IT WAS ONE GUITAR  
INSTEAD OF 3 GUITARS.

UH, NO PIANO.  
NO HORNS.

YOU KNOW?

AND, UM, A SPARE  
KIND OF SOUND.

NARRATOR: IF A LIVE BAND  
WASN'T AVAILABLE,

THE TAVERN OWNERS  
KEPT THE PATRONS HAPPY

WITH A JUKEBOX IN THE CORNER

THAT COULD BOOM OUT  
A SONG FOR A NICKEL.

BY 1946, THERE WERE NEARLY  
300,000 JUKEBOXES IN THE NATION.

4 BILLION NICKELS  
WERE DROPPED INTO THEM.

â<sup>a</sup>

BUT THE NEW SOUND  
WOULD BE JUST ONE WAY

COUNTRY MUSIC CHANGED  
AFTER WORLD WAR II.

A TENNESSEE FARM BOY WOULD GO  
IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION,  
  
BECOMING A CROONER OF LOVE SONGS  
THAT APPEALED TO PEOPLE

WHO NORMALLY CONSIDERED  
HILLBILLY MUSIC BENEATH THEM.

THE LEADER OF  
A STRING BAND FROM KENTUCKY

NOW ASSEMBLED A NEW  
GROUP OF MUSICIANS,

INCLUDING A YOUNG TEXTILE-MILL  
WORKER FROM NORTH CAROLINA.

TOGETHER THEY WOULD  
PUSH THE BOUNDARIES

OF ONE OF THE OLDEST FORMS  
OF COUNTRY MUSIC

INTO ITS OWN CATEGORY,  
WITH ITS OWN NAME.

STILL, HONKY-TONK MUSIC  
WAS TAKING OVER,

LED AT FIRST BY  
A SHARECROPPER'S SON FROM TEXAS,

WHO CARRIED THE NEW  
ELECTRIFIED SOUND

ALL THE WAY TO THE STAGE  
OF THE GRAND OLE OPRY.

WILLIAMS: "6 MORE MILES  
AND LEAVE MY DARLING..."

NARRATOR: BUT IT WAS A SKINNY  
SINGER-SONGWRITER FROM ALABAMA,

WHO ROCKETED TO FAME  
AND WAS GONE

BEFORE HE REACHED  
THE AGE OF 30,

WHO WOULD LEAVE AN IMPERISHABLE  
MARK ON AMERICAN MUSIC.

WILLIAMS: "6 MORE MILES  
LONG AND SAD..."



NARRATOR:  
HE COULD GET ANY CROWD  
DANCING TO HIS GOOD-TIME BEAT,  
THEN BRING THEM TO TEARS  
WITH HIS SONGS OF ALMOST  
INEXPRESSIBLE HEARTACHE,  
WRITTEN FROM HIS OWN  
PERSONAL TORMENTS.

WILLIAMS: "OH, I HEAR  
THE TRAIN A-COMIN' "

"BRINGIN' MY DARLIN'  
BACK HOME "

"6 MORE MILES  
TO THE GRAVEYARD "

"AND I'LL BE  
LEFT HERE ALL ALONE "

"6 MORE MILES...

MAN: HE MADE YOU THINK HE WAS  
SINGING STRICTLY TO YOU.

"THIS GUY UNDERSTANDS ME.  
HE KNOWS THE PAIN I FEEL.

"HE KNOWS WHAT I'VE DONE  
AND, UH, WHAT I'VE EXPERIENCED.

"HE KNOWS IT JUST AS WELL  
AS I DO

AND THIS SONG HE'S SINGING,  
HE'S SINGING DIRECTLY TO ME."

WILLIAMS: "I EVER HAD...

MY MOTHER USED TO  
SING ME SONGS AT NIGHT

TO MAKE ME GO TO SLEEP,

AND SHE WAS A PRETTY  
DARN GOOD SINGER.

AND LATER ON IN LIFE, I LEARNED  
THAT THOSE SONGS THAT I LOVED

THAT SHE WAS SINGING ME  
WERE SONGS BY HANK WILLIAMS.

SO, I WAS A HUGE  
HANK WILLIAMS FAN

BEFORE I EVEN KNEW  
WHO HANK WAS.

HANK WILLIAMS HAD THE GUTS  
TO PUT INTO WORDS

WHAT WE WERE ALL  
THINKING AND FEELING

BUT WERE TOO EMBARRASSED TO SAY.

HE CUT RIGHT TO THE BONE.

â

â

â NOW, IF YOU LOVE YOUR MAMA

â AND YOU TREAT HER RIGHT

â BUT SHE KEEPS ON FUSSIN'  
AT YOU EVERY DAY AND NIGHT â

â AND SHE'S GONNA  
TRIFLE ON YA â

â THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

â AND WHEN YOUR BABY  
STARTS TO STEPPIN' â

â LORD, YOU NEARLY  
LOSE YOUR MIND â

â NOW, IF YOUR MAMA'S MEAN, TAKE  
A TIP FROM ME, LOCK HER UP... â

MAN: I LOVED ERNEST TUBB.

"THREE CHORDS AND THE TRUTH,"  
THAT'S PRETTY MUCH ERNEST.

HIS SONGS WEREN'T COMPLICATED;

ANYBODY WHO COULD PLAY  
A LITTLE GUITAR COULD SING THEM.

AND THAT'S WHY I THINK  
HE WAS SO POPULAR.

NARRATOR: BY 1946, THE FIELD OF  
HONKY-TONK SINGERS

WAS ALREADY CROWDED--  
BUT NO ONE WAS BIGGER THAN

THE 6-FOOT TEXAN WITH  
A TOOTHY SMILE AND A DEEP VOICE:

ERNEST TUBB.

TUBB: " ...LOVING, LORD,  
BUT WATCH HER CLOSELY, TOO "

" 'CAUSE SHE'S GONNA...

NARRATOR: EVERY SATURDAY  
AFTERNOON, HE WOULD BROADCAST

A NATIONAL HALF-HOUR RADIO SHOW,  
THE CHECKERBOARD JAMBOREE,

THEN PERFORM ON  
THE LIVE BROADCAST

OF THE GRAND OLE OPRY

FROM THE RYMAN AUDITORIUM,

HEARD BY MILLIONS OF LISTENERS  
ON RADIO STATION WSM.

TUBB: " YOU COME HOME  
TO YOUR MAMA... "

NARRATOR: AFTER THE SHOW,  
HE WOULD LOAD

HIS BAND, THE TEXAS TROUBADOURS,

INTO HIS TOUR BUS  
AND SET OFF FOR

AS MANY PERSONAL APPEARANCES  
AS POSSIBLE

BEFORE HE HAD TO BE  
BACK IN NASHVILLE

FOR THE NEXT  
SATURDAY BROADCAST.

TUBB:  
" ...STARTS TO STEPPIN',  
LORD, YOU NEARLY LOSE... "

NARRATOR: TUBB BELIEVED

THAT PART OF HIS POPULARITY  
WAS BECAUSE HIS VOICE  
REALLY WASN'T ALL THAT GOOD.

TUBB: "â€¦SAYS THAT  
SHE IS TRUE, BUT WAIT... â€¦"

BENSON: YOU KNOW,  
IT AIN'T CARUSO.

"WHY ARE YOU FAMOUS, ERNEST?"

HE SAYS, "WELL,  
I'M FAMOUS BECAUSE

"AN OLD BOY PUTS A QUARTER--  
A NICKEL IN THE JUKEBOX

"AND PUTS IT ON AND SAYS,

'HELL, I CAN SING  
AS WELL AS THAT GUY.'"

YOU KNOW? [LAUGHS]  
HE BRAGS TO HIS GIRLFRIEND.

TUBB: "â€¦ LOSE YOUR MIND  
AND IT DRIVES YOU CRAZY.

MAN: I'VE HEARD PEOPLE SAY,  
"WELL, HE NEVER COULD SING."

AND I SAID, "NO, AND HE GOES  
TO THE BANK EVERY MONTH

AND PUTS A LOT OF MONEY IN THERE  
BECAUSE HE CAN'T SING."

NARRATOR: AFTER HEARING  
HIS FIRST JIMMIE RODGERS RECORD

AT THE AGE OF 15  
IN BROWNWOOD, TEXAS,

ERNEST TUBB'S  
SOLE AMBITION IN LIFE

HAD BEEN TO FOLLOW  
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HIS IDOL.

TUBB: "â€¦ I'LL BE LOVING AMERICA  
THE YODELER â€¦"

"â€¦ JIMMIE RODGERS  
YOU ALL KNEW BY NAME... â€¦"

NARRATOR: IN 1936,  
HE MET RODGERS' WIDOW,

AND TOGETHER THEY WENT ON  
A JIMMIE RODGERS TRIBUTE TOUR

TO SMALL TOWN MOVIE THEATERS  
IN SOUTH TEXAS.

SHE EVEN LET HIM PLAY  
THE FAMOUS MARTIN GUITAR

THAT RODGERS HIMSELF  
HAD ONCE USED.

TUBB: "IT LEFT MANY EYES  
FILLED WITH TEARS"

"HE GAVE UP THE STRIFE  
IN THE PRIME OF HIS LIFE"

"SAID GOOD-BYE  
AFTER 35 YEARS"

NARRATOR: WHEN A TONSILLECTOMY  
LEFT HIS THROAT BADLY DAMAGED,

TUBB COULD NO LONGER  
YODEL LIKE HIS HERO.

HE STARTED WRITING  
HIS OWN SONGS,

DEVELOPING A WARMER  
VOCAL STYLE,

BUT WHEN HE LEARNED THAT PEOPLE  
COULDN'T HEAR HIS ACOUSTIC MUSIC

ON JUKEBOXES IN THE LOUD  
ROADHOUSES AROUND FORT WORTH,

HE BROUGHT IN A MUSICIAN TO PLAY  
AN ELECTRIFIED LEAD GUITAR

AT HIS NEXT RECORDING SESSION.

THE RESULT  
WAS A STRING OF HITS,

STARTING WITH  
"WALKING THE FLOOR OVER YOU."

TUBB: "YOU LEFT ME  
AND YOU WENT AWAY..."

FOSTER: YOU KNOW, THERE WAS  
A SERVICE STATION

BUILT ABOUT A MILE AND A QUARTER  
FROM OUR FARM,

UP ON HIGHWAY 108.

MR. SIM, WHO OWNED IT,  
PUT IN A JUKEBOX.

TUBB: "YOU DID, DEAR, BUT  
I DO KNOW THAT YOU'RE GONE..."

FOSTER: AND I COULD  
BE OUT IN THE FIELDS

AND SOMEBODY WOULD  
PLAY THE JUKEBOX.

AND I COULD HEAR IT.

NOW, I COULDN'T ALWAYS  
HEAR THE WORDS,

BUT I COULD TELL  
WHAT MELODY IT WAS.

THERE WAS ONLY ONE ARTIST  
THAT PLAYED ON THAT JUKEBOX

I COULD UNDERSTAND EVERY WORD,  
EVEN FROM WHERE I WAS,

AND THAT WAS ERNEST TUBB.

AND I SAID TO  
MY MOTHER ONE DAY,

"WHEN I GET ME A RECORD COMPANY  
SOMEDAY," WHICH WAS RIDICULOUS,

"I'M ONLY GOING TO SIGN ARTISTS

THAT ARE AS GOOD  
AS ERNEST TUBB."

TUBB: "NOW, DARLING,  
YOU KNOW I LOVE YOU WELL..."

NARRATOR: IN 1947, ERNEST TUBB  
AND THE COMEDIENNE MINNIE PEARL

HEADLINED AN OPRY CAST  
THAT PLAYED FOR TWO NIGHTS

AT NEW YORK CITY'S

CARNEGIE HALL,

THE PALATIAL AND PRESTIGIOUS  
VENUE FOR CLASSICAL MUSIC.

"BOY," TUBB SAID  
AT THE START OF THE CONCERT,

"THIS PLACE COULD SURE  
HOLD A LOT OF HAY."

TUBB: "I'M HOPING  
AND I'M PRAYING..."

NARRATOR:  
THAT SAME YEAR, HE OPENED

THE ERNEST TUBB RECORD SHOP

IN DOWNTOWN NASHVILLE, NOT FAR  
FROM THE RYMAN AUDITORIUM.

TO PUBLICIZE THE STORE,  
TUBB STARTED

THE MIDNITE JAMBOREE,  
BROADCAST ON LOCATION

IMMEDIATELY AFTER  
THE GRAND OLE OPRY.

HE SERVED AS THE HOST,  
PREFERRING TO HIGHLIGHT

OTHER ARTISTS AND THEIR SONGS,  
RATHER THAN HIS OWN.

HE DID IT REMEMBERING  
THE GENEROSITY

OF JIMMIE RODGERS' WIDOW  
IN HELPING LAUNCH HIM

INTO THE MUSIC BUSINESS.

"WHAT CAN I DO TO REPAY YOU?"  
HE HAD ASKED HER.

"JUST DO THE SAME FOR OTHERS,"  
SHE ANSWERED.

HE DID.

TUBB: "WALKING  
THE FLOOR OVER YOU"

"

STUART: THERE'S A SAYING  
IN NASHVILLE,

"IT ALL BEGINS WITH A SONG."

SONGS ARE THE MAGIC CARPETS  
THAT CHANGE THINGS.

WILLIAMS: "AS WE  
JOURNEY ALONG..."

EVERYTHING REMAINS THE SAME  
UNTIL YOU FIND THE RIGHT SONG

AND THEN THINGS CHANGE.

THE WORLD CHANGED BECAUSE OF  
HANK WILLIAMS' SONGS.

WILLIAMS: "...ARE WE..."

WOMAN: ONE OF MY GRANDFATHER'S  
MOST FAMOUS QUOTES,

HE USED TO SAY, "I DON'T KNOW  
WHAT YOU MEAN BY COUNTRY MUSIC.

I JUST WRITE SONGS  
THE WAY I KNOW HOW."

NARRATOR: IN THE LATE SUMMER  
OF 1946,

HANK WILLIAMS WAS  
JUST A FEW DAYS SHY

OF HIS 23rd BIRTHDAY.

THEY HAD BEEN A HARD 23 YEARS.

HE WAS BORN ON  
SEPTEMBER 17, 1923,

IN A DIRT-FLOOR LOG HOUSE

HIS PARENTS RENTED  
IN MOUNT OLIVE, ALABAMA,

AND WAS CHRISTENED HIRIAM,

AFTER ONE OF THE KINGS  
IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

HIS FATHER, LON, WHO HAD  
RETURNED FROM WORLD WAR I



SUFFERING FROM SHELL SHOCK,  
WORKED A VARIETY OF JOBS  
UNTIL HIS CONDITION FORCED HIM

TO ENTER A VETERANS HOSPITAL  
IN LOUISIANA,

IN EFFECT DEPARTING  
FROM HIS SON'S LIFE.

HIS MOTHER LILLIE WAS  
A STRONG AND AMBITIOUS WOMAN.

SHE MOVED HER SON AND DAUGHTER

TO A SUCCESSION OF TOWNS  
IN SOUTHERN ALABAMA,

FINALLY ENDING UP  
IN MONTGOMERY,

WHERE SHE OPENED UP  
A BOARDINGHOUSE.

HER SON WAS FRAIL AND SKINNY,

PROBABLY THE RESULT OF  
A CONGENITAL SPINAL DEFECT.

BUT HE WAS FUN-LOVING  
AND OUTGOING,

AND PREFERRED THAT PEOPLE  
CALL HIM HANK, NOT HIRIAM.

LILLIE ENCOURAGED  
HIS INTEREST IN MUSIC,

SENDING HIM TO  
A GOSPEL SINGING SCHOOL

AND GETTING HIM  
HIS FIRST GUITAR AT AGE 8.

ALONG THE WAY, HE MET A BLACK  
STREET MUSICIAN, RUFUS PAYNE,

KNOWN TO EVERYONE AS "TEE-TOT,"

WHO TAUGHT HIM CHORDS  
ON THE GUITAR

AND LET THE BOY FOLLOW ALONG

AS HE AND HIS BAND  
ROAMED THE STREETS

PLAYING FOR HANDOUTS.

"ALL THE MUSIC TRAINING  
I EVER HAD,"

WILLIAMS SAID LATER,  
"WAS FROM HIM."

STUART: THE BLACK MUSICAL  
INFLUENCE IN COUNTRY MUSIC

IS IMMEASURABLE AS FAR  
AS I'M CONCERNED.

IF YOU TOOK MR. LESLEY RIDDLE  
OUT OF THE A.P. CARTER EQUATION

AS A SONG CATCHER  
AND A SONG GATHERER,

IF YOU TOOK ARNOLD SHULTZ  
OUT OF BILL MONROE'S LIFE,

OR IF YOU TOOK TEE-TOT  
OUT OF HANK WILLIAMS' LIFE,

JUST THOSE 3 ALONE,  
LOOK HOW DIFFERENT

IT WOULD HAVE TURNED OUT.

NARRATOR: IN MONTGOMERY,  
WILLIAMS SHINED SHOES,

SANG ON STREET CORNERS  
WHILE HE HAWKED

PEANUTS HIS MOTHER HAD ROASTED,

AND QUIT SCHOOL EARLY.

HE DEVELOPED A TASTE  
FOR ALCOHOL AT 11,

AND WHEN HE WON  
A LOCAL TALENT CONTEST,

SINGING A SONG HE HAD WRITTEN,  
"WPA BLUES,"

HE IMMEDIATELY SPENT  
HIS \$15 PRIZE

PARTYING WITH HIS FRIENDS.

RADIO STATION WSFA SOON

FEATURED HIM ON BROADCASTS

AS "THE SINGING KID."

ENCOURAGED, HE FORMED A BAND  
CALLED THE DRIFTING COWBOYS,

WHICH PLAYED SMALL-TIME GIGS  
AT THEATRES AND SCHOOLHOUSES

IN ALABAMA, GEORGIA,  
AND THE FLORIDA PANHANDLE.

LILLIE WAS THE DRIVING FORCE  
BEHIND IT,

PUTTING UP HANDBILLS, COLLECTING  
THE MONEY AT THE DOOR,

AND CONSTANTLY SCOLDING HER SON

WHENEVER HE STRAYED,  
WHICH WAS OFTEN.

MAN: IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN HANK

UNLESS YOU GO BACK TO  
THE WAY HE WAS RAISED.

HE WORKED THOSE LITTLE JOINTS.

HIS MOTHER LILLIE  
WOULD TAKE HIM,

AND IF HE DIDN'T PLAY 'EM  
JUST RIGHT, SHE'D CUFF HIM.

HE GREW UP WITH THAT.  
"YOU DO IT RIGHT, BOY."

NARRATOR: BUT SHE ALSO  
SOMETIMES CAME TO HIS DEFENSE

WHEN DRUNKS IN THE AUDIENCE  
PICKED A FIGHT WITH HIM.

"THERE AIN'T NOBODY  
IN THIS HERE WORLD

"THAT I'D RATHER HAVE  
STANDIN' NEXT TO ME

IN A BEER JOINT BRAWL,"  
HANK SAID,

"THAN MY MAW WITH  
A BROKEN BOTTLE IN HER HAND."

BUT BY 1942,  
HIS OWN BINGE DRINKING

HAD BECOME SUCH A PROBLEM,

THE MONTGOMERY STATION  
FIRED HIM.

A YEAR LATER, WORKING IN

A MEDICINE SHOW  
IN BRUNDIDGE, ALABAMA,

HE MET A PRETTY  
DRUGSTORE CLERK

WHO TURNED OUT  
TO POSSESS THE SAME

STEELY DETERMINATION  
AS HIS MOTHER.

AUDREY MAE SHEPPARD WAS STILL

TECHNICALLY MARRIED  
TO ANOTHER MAN

WHO HAD ABANDONED HER  
AND HER YOUNG DAUGHTER,

BUT SHE WAS IRRESISTIBLY  
DRAWN TO WILLIAMS.

"I KNEW WHAT I WANTED AND I  
WENT AFTER IT," SHE RECALLED.

"HE WAS LUCKY WITH  
A GOD-GIVEN TALENT,

AND I WAS LUCKY  
WITH A FEW BRAINS."

HIS BACK PROBLEMS KEPT HIM  
OUT OF WORLD WAR II.

FOR A WHILE, HE AND AUDREY  
WORKED AT

THE ALABAMA DRY DOCK  
AND SHIPBUILDING COMPANY  
IN MOBILE,

UNTIL SHE PUSHED HIM TO GO BACK  
TO MONTGOMERY AND HIS MUSIC.

MAN: MY MOTHER SAID,

"LOOK, YOU'RE GOOD.

YOUR MUSIC IS GOOD.  
YOUR SONGS ARE GOOD."

AND YOU TAKE OUT MAMA, AND THEN  
MAYBE THE GUY SITS DOWN THERE

AND WELDS SHIPS TOGETHER  
AND THEN GOES TO THE NEXT JOB.

MAYBE IF THERE'S NO AUDREY,  
THERE'S NO HANK.

NARRATOR: BY THE WAR'S END,  
THEY WERE MARRIED.

ONE NIGHT IN MONTGOMERY,  
HE WAS THE OPENING ACT

FOR ONE OF HIS IDOLS,  
ERNEST TUBB.

WILLIAMS TOLD HIM THAT  
HE HAD TRIED IMITATING

TUBB'S HONKY-TONK STYLE,

AND HE HAD TRIED IMITATING

ROY ACUFF'S MORE  
EMOTIONAL DELIVERY,

BUT HAD FINALLY FOUND HIS  
OWN VOICE SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN.

IN 1946, HE AND AUDREY  
BOARDED A TRAIN FOR NASHVILLE,

WHERE HE HOPED TO MAKE  
A NAME FOR HIMSELF.

THERE, HE MET WITH THE RENOWNED  
SONGWRITER FRED ROSE,

WHO RAN ACUFF-ROSE PUBLISHING,

ONE OF THE FIRST  
MUSIC PUBLISHERS IN TOWN.

ROSE TOOK AN IMMEDIATE LIKING  
TO WILLIAMS

AND HELPED HIM GET  
A RECORDING DEAL OF HIS OWN,

BEFORE HE AND AUDREY

RETURNED HOME TO MONTGOMERY.

AMONG THE SONGS  
WILLIAMS RECORDED

WAS ONE THAT SHOWED  
THE INFLUENCE OF

RUFUS "TEE-TOT" PAYNE.

IT WAS CALLED  
"MOVE IT ON OVER."

WILLIAMS: "SO,  
MOVE IT ON OVER"

MEN: "MOVE IT  
ON OVER"

WILLIAMS: "MOVE IT ON OVER"

MEN: "MOVE IT  
ON OVER"

WILLIAMS: "MOVE OVER,  
LITTLE DOG"

"'CAUSE THE BIG DOG'S  
MOVIN' IN..."

NARRATOR: WHEN IT WAS RELEASED  
IN JUNE OF 1947,

IT BECAME WILLIAMS' FIRST HIT.

WILLIAMS: "MORE,  
SO GET IT ON OVER"

MEN: "MOVE IT  
ON OVER"

WILLIAMS: "SCOOT IT ON OVER"

MEN: "MOVE IT  
ON OVER"

WILLIAMS: "MOVE OVER,  
SKINNY DOG"

"'CAUSE THE FAT DOG'S  
MOVIN' IN"

WILLIAMS, JR.: THEY SAY  
"ROCK AROUND THE CLOCK"

IS THE FIRST ROCK SONG.

I DON'T AGREE WITH THAT.

"ROCK AROUND THE CLOCK"  
IS A DIRECT STEAL

OF "MOVE IT ON OVER."

LISTEN TO THEM,  
COMPARE THEM SOMETIME.

â€ CAME IN LAST NIGHT  
AT A HALF PAST--DA, DA, DA, DA â€

â€ I'M GOING TO ROCK AROUND  
THE CLOCK, MOVE IT ON OVER â€

WILLIAMS: â€ ...SIDE'S MINE,  
SO, SHOVE IT ON OVER â€

MEN: â€ MOVE IT  
ON OVER â€

WILLIAMS: â€ SWEEP IT ON OVER

MEN: â€ MOVE IT  
ON OVER â€

WILLIAMS: â€ MOVE OVER,  
COLD DOG â€

â€ 'CAUSE A HOT DOG'S  
MOVIN' IN â€

MAN: IT'S WSM,  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE,

THE BROADCASTING SERVICE OF

THE NATIONAL LIFE AND ACCIDENT  
INSURANCE COMPANY,

PRESENTING THE GRAND OLE OPRY.

LET HER GO, BOYS.

â€

ROY ACUFF: â€ FROM THE GREAT  
ATLANTIC OCEAN TO... â€

MAN: NATIONAL LIFE  
AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE COMPANY

WOULD TELL THEIR AGENTS TO WALK

THROUGH NEIGHBORHOODS  
ON A SATURDAY NIGHT,

AND IF THE DOOR WAS OPEN,  
THE WINDOW WAS UP,

AND THEY HEARD  
THE GRAND OLE OPRY

COMING THROUGH EITHER  
THE SCREEN DOOR OR THE WINDOW,

OUT IN THE STREET,  
THEY MADE A NOTE.

THEY WROTE DOWN THE ADDRESS.

THEY WERE BACK IN THERE

INTO THAT NEIGHBORHOOD  
ON MONDAY MORNING.

[KNOCKING ON DOOR]

MAN 2: I'D KNOCK ON THE DOOR  
AND I'D INTRODUCE MYSELF.

I'D SAY, "I'M BUD WENDELL  
AND I'M WITH

"THE NATIONAL LIFE AND ACCIDENT  
INSURANCE COMPANY OF NASHVILLE.

"WE OWN WSM  
AND THE GRAND OLE OPRY.

"PERHAPS YOU'VE HEARD OF  
THE GRAND OLE OPRY?

"AND I HAVE A LITTLE GIFT HERE  
I'D LIKE TO GIVE YOU.

MAY I STEP IN?"

AND THEY WOULD HAVE  
CANVASSING ITEMS,

SOUVENIRS FROM THE GRAND OLE  
OPRY, THESE AGENTS.

THEY WOULD HAVE GRAND OLE OPRY,  
WSM CALENDARS.

THEY WOULD HAVE  
RULERS, FLY SWATTERS,

JUST LITTLE THINGS THAT  
THEY COULD USE TO ENTICE,



AND THEN THEY WOULD GET AROUND  
TO TALKING ABOUT INSURANCE.

WENDELL: A LOT  
OF THEIR QUESTIONS

HAD TO DO WITH THE ARTISTS.

"DO YOU KNOW ROY ACUFF?"

OR "DO YOU KNOW MINNIE PEARL?"

OR "WE LISTENED TO THE OPRY  
LAST SATURDAY NIGHT

AND WE SURE LOVED THE SONG  
THAT, UH, THAT ACUFF DID."

OR THAT SORT OF THING.

BUT I'D TRY TO GET THEM ONTO  
THE SUBJECT OF LIFE INSURANCE.

THAT'S WHY I'M THERE.  
I'M NOT THERE TO TELL HIM

THE LIFE STORY OF  
ANY OF THE OPRY STARS.

BUT THE CONNECTION  
WITH THE OPRY

WAS A TREMENDOUS DOOR OPENER.

NARRATOR: HUNDREDS OF  
RADIO STATIONS ACROSS THE NATION

NOW BROADCAST WEEKLY  
BARN DANCE PROGRAMS--

FROM PHILADELPHIA'S  
HAYLOFT HOEDOWN

TO THE CAROLINA HAYRIDE  
IN CHARLOTTE,

FROM THE OZARK JUBILEE  
IN SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI

TO DALLAS' BIG D JAMBOREE

AND CALIFORNIA'S  
HOLLYWOOD BARN DANCE.

BUT THE LINE-UP OF STARS  
AT NASHVILLE'S GRAND OLE OPRY

WAS UNEQUALED, AND WSM's  
POWERFUL 50,000-WATT SIGNAL

COULD BEAM THE SHOW  
TO BOTH COASTS

FROM THE RYMAN AUDITORIUM,

THE MOTHER CHURCH  
OF COUNTRY MUSIC.

MAN: OH, MY GOODNESS,  
FOR A COUNTRY MUSICIAN

TO BE ASKED TO JOIN THE OPRY,

THAT'S KIND OF LIKE  
SAYING YOU WANT TO GO

TO HEAVEN WHEN YOU DIE.  
[LAUGHS]

IT'S THE TOP OF THE LADDER,  
IT'S THE ULTIMATE.

DO YOU WANT TO PLAY FIRST BASE  
FOR THE NEW YORK YANKEES?

DO YOU WANT TO PITCH  
FOR THE BOSTON RED SOX?

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

AND TO SAY THAT ABOUT...  
DO YOU WANT TO BE

A MEMBER OF THE GRAND OLE OPRY,

THAT'S JUST ABOUT  
AS GOOD A QUESTION

AS ANYBODY COULD EVER ASK.

AND THERE'S ONLY ONE ANSWER.  
YEAH! [LAUGHS]

EDDY ARNOLD: â€” I'M SENDING YOU  
A BIG BOUQUET OF ROSES â€”

MAN: HE SPREAD THE WORD.

HE WAS OUR FIRST POP CROSSOVER.

PEOPLE BOUGHT  
EDDY ARNOLD RECORDS

WHO WOULDN'T BUY

## COUNTRY RECORDS

BECAUSE, AS EDDY SAID,  
HE WAS SMOOTH.

ARNOLD: "TEARS WILL FALL

NARRATOR: IN OCTOBER 1947,  
NOT LONG AFTER ERNEST TUBB

HAD PERFORMED AT CARNEGIE HALL,

ANOTHER STAR OF  
THE GRAND OLE OPRY

APPEARED IN ANOTHER  
UNLIKELY VENUE

FOR A HILLBILLY SINGER.

EDDY ARNOLD FILLED  
WASHINGTON, D.C.'s

CONSTITUTION HALL  
FOR TWO STRAIGHT NIGHTS.

ARNOLD: "SO, I'M SENDING YOU  
A BIG BOUQUET OF ROSES"

NARRATOR: HIS MUSIC, PROMINENTLY  
FEATURING A STEEL GUITAR,

WAS UNMISTAKABLY COUNTRY.

BUT HE WAS JUST AS UNMISTAKABLY

NOT ANOTHER ERNEST TUBB

OR THE UP-AND-COMING  
HANK WILLIAMS.

MAN: MY GRANDFATHER  
WAS A ROMANTIC.

AND SO, HE REALLY ALWAYS  
FOCUSED IN ON LOVE SONGS.

THEY WEREN'T ABOUT, YOU KNOW,  
DRINKING OR CHEATING,

OR ANYTHING  
LIKE THAT, NECESSARILY.

THEY WERE ABOUT LOVE.

NARRATOR: RICHARD EDWARD ARNOLD

WAS BORN ON A FARM NEAR  
HENDERSON, TENNESSEE IN 1918,

THE YOUNGEST OF 16 CHILDREN.

ON HIS 11th BIRTHDAY,  
HIS FATHER DIED,

SO DEEPLY IN DEBT  
THE FAMILY FARM AND IMPLEMENTS

HAD TO BE AUCTIONED OFF,

AND THE ARNOLDS  
FOUND THEMSELVES AS TENANTS

WORKING ON WHAT HAD BEEN  
THEIR OWN LAND.

EDDY DECIDED SINGING  
MIGHT BE HIS WAY OUT.

IN 1938, HE AND A FRIEND  
LANDED A JOB

AT A ST. LOUIS RADIO STATION,

BILLED AS THE TENNESSEE  
HARMONY LADS.

BUT ARNOLD DREAMED  
OF BIGGER THINGS.

"I KNEW WHERE I WANTED  
TO GO," HE SAID,

"BECAUSE I COULDN'T GO BACK."

HIS BIG BREAK CAME IN 1940,

WHEN PEE WEE KING INVITED HIM  
TO JOIN THE GOLDEN WEST COWBOYS

FOR A GUARANTEE OF \$15 A WEEK.

BILLED AS  
"SMILIN' EDDY ARNOLD,"

HE WOULD SING BALLADS,

SELL PEE WEE'S SONGBOOKS  
AT INTERMISSION,

AND FOR EXTRA MONEY  
SWEEP OUT THE AUDITORIUM

AFTER EACH PERFORMANCE.

IN 1943,  
HE WENT OUT ON HIS OWN,

SINGING ON THE OPRY  
AS THE TENNESSEE PLOWBOY

AND DOING A MORNING SHOW ON WSM  
RIGHT AFTER ERNEST TUBB'S.

[ARNOLD YODELING]

NARRATOR: PEOPLE RESPONDED  
TO HIS CLEAN-CUT IMAGE--

NEATLY PRESSED SLACKS;  
A CRISP, WHITE SHIRT;

A HANDSOME, SQUARE-JAWED FACE;

SOMETIMES WITH A DAPPER  
RANCHER'S HAT ON HIS HEAD.

THEY LOVED HIS MUSIC EVEN MORE,

A MELLOW VOICE THAT COULD  
NOT ONLY CROON LOVE BALLADS,

BUT ALSO BREAK INTO  
A SMOOTH YODEL

ON A FAVORITE UPBEAT SONG,  
"CATTLE CALL."

[ARNOLD YODELING]

NARRATOR: HE WAS MANAGED NOW  
BY THOMAS A. PARKER,

A FORMER CARNIVAL PROMOTER  
WITH A FLAIR FOR PUBLICITY

WHO INSISTED ON BEING CALLED  
COLONEL PARKER.

TO ATTRACT ATTENTION  
TO HIS STAR ON THE ROAD,

PARKER OFTEN DEMANDED  
A POLICE ESCORT INTO TOWN,

OR EVEN WHEN THEY  
WENT OUT FOR A HAMBURGER.

AT THE END OF 1947,  
ARNOLD'S SONG

"I'LL HOLD YOU IN MY HEART"  
REACHED NUMBER ONE

ON BILLBOARD'S RANKING  
OF HILLBILLY MUSIC.

IT WOULD STAY THERE  
FOR AN UNPRECEDENTED 21 WEEKS,

AND BE FOLLOWED BY 4 OTHERS.

OF THE 6 NUMBER-ONE  
COUNTRY SONGS IN 1948,

EDDY ARNOLD HAD 5 OF THEM.

ARNOLD: "WAIT FOR ME

STUART: THE FIRST STAR THAT I  
EVER SAW IN MY LIFE IN PERSON

WAS BILL MONROE.

HE COULD DO THINGS THAT  
NOBODY ELSE IN COUNTRY MUSIC

COULD DO, YOU KNOW.  
[PLAYING MANDOLIN]

HE COULD DO THAT.

AND HE REQUIRED  
EVERYBODY AROUND HIM

TO DO THAT, AT THAT LEVEL, TOO.

MAN: IN MUSIC HISTORY,  
BILL MONROE, TO ME,

HE'S AS IMPORTANT  
AS CHARLIE PARKER.

I MEAN, YOU THINK ABOUT IT,  
HOW MANY PEOPLE

HAVE A GENRE OF MUSIC  
THAT THEY STARTED,

THAT THEY CAN SAY,  
"THIS MAN RIGHT HERE

STARTED A WHOLE NEW  
GENRE OF MUSIC."

BILL MONROE DID THAT.

"

BILL MONROE AND HIS BLUE GRASS  
BOYS: "IT'S MIGHTY DARK

"FOR ME TO TRAVEL, FOR MY...

MAN: I THINK  
THERE ARE COSMIC FORCES

BY WAY OF HUMAN BEINGS  
THAT HIT THE PLANET.

BILL MONROE WAS ONE.

THERE'S JUST ONE BILL MONROE.

UH, THERE'S JUST  
ONE MARK TWAIN.

YOU KNOW, THERE'S JUST  
ONE EINSTEIN, ONE HEMINGWAY.

SKAGGS: WHEN BILL  
PUT HIS BAND TOGETHER

AND CAME TO NASHVILLE IN 1939

AND GOT TO BE A MEMBER  
OF THE GRAND OLE OPRY,

HIS MUSIC STARTED CHANGING.

AND HE STARTED LOOKING  
FOR A DIFFERENT SOUND.

I THINK IN HIS BRAIN  
HE WAS HEARING

SOMETHING THAT WAS UNIQUE,

BUT HE DIDN'T KNOW  
EXACTLY WHAT IT WAS.

NARRATOR: BILL MONROE  
WAS TEMPERAMENTAL,

QUICK TO TAKE OFFENSE,  
AND A PERFECTIONIST,

NEVER ENTIRELY SATISFIED  
WITH THE MUSIC

HE HAD BEEN PLAYING  
WITH THE BLUE GRASS BOYS,

NAMED IN HONOR OF HIS  
HOME STATE OF KENTUCKY.

IN LATE 1945, HE BEGAN  
RECONFIGURING THE BAND,

BRINGING IN CHUBBY WISE,  
WHO HAD POPULARIZED

"ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL,"  
ON THE FIDDLE;

CEDRIC RAINWATER ON BASS;

LESTER FLATT, FROM  
DUNCAN'S CHAPEL, TENNESSEE,

SINGING LEAD  
AND PLAYING GUITAR.

AND TO REPLACE DAVE  
"STRINGBEAN" AKEMAN ON BANJO,

MONROE HIRED  
A QUIET 21-YEAR-OLD

FROM FLINT HILL, NORTH CAROLINA

NAMED EARL SCRUGGS.

SCRUGGS HAD BEEN PLAYING BANJO  
SINCE AGE 4,

AND AS A BOY STARTED  
EXPERIMENTING WITH

A 3-FINGERED TECHNIQUE POPULAR  
IN NORTH CAROLINA'S PIEDMONT.

â<sup>a</sup>

AFTER WORKING IN A TEXTILE MILL

TO SUPPORT HIS WIDOWED MOTHER  
DURING THE WAR,

SCRUGGS JOINED A BAND  
IN KNOXVILLE

AND FURTHER REFINED HIS  
PROPULSIVE, ROLLING STYLE,

SO DIFFERENT FROM  
THE "CLAWHAMMER" TECHNIQUE

USED BY STRINGBEAN  
AND THE OPRY'S UNCLE DAVE MACON,

BOTH OF THEM AS MUCH COMEDIANS



AS BANJO PLAYERS.

SCRUGGS WAS DEFINITELY  
NOT A COMEDIAN.

ALMOST PAINFULLY SHY,  
HE OVERCAME HIS STAGE FRIGHT

BY CONCENTRATING ON MAKING  
HIS LIGHTNING-LIKE FINGER WORK

APPEAR EFFORTLESS.

WHEN EARL WALKED UP  
ANYWHERE NEAR THAT MIC,

HE WAS PICKING  
SO HARD AND DEFINITE

THAT HIS EXCITEMENT  
WOULD PENETRATE THE AUDIENCE.

IT WOULD JUST MAKE THEM NUTS.

HE BROUGHT TO IT THE SAME THING  
THAT EDDIE VAN HALEN

BROUGHT TO ROCK AND ROLL  
SHREDDING GUITAR.

[IMITATING PLAYING GUITAR]  
IT WAS SO FAST.

IT WAS WHAT EXCITED PEOPLE.

STUBBS: HE WAS  
A 21-YEAR-OLD KID,

PLAYING THE BANJO IN A WAY THAT  
NO ONE HAD EVER HEARD BEFORE.

HE WASN'T THE FIRST PERSON  
TO PLAY WITH A 3-FINGER ROLL,

BUT HE WAS THE FIRST PERSON  
WHO CAME TO NASHVILLE WITH IT.

EARL SCRUGGS IS ONE OF THE  
SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT MUSICIANS,

NOT JUST IN THE HISTORY  
OF COUNTRY MUSIC,

NOT JUST AS AN ARCHITECT OF  
WHAT WE KNOW AS BLUEGRASS MUSIC,

BUT HE'S ONE OF THE SINGLE MOST

IMPORTANT INSTRUMENTALISTS

IN THE HISTORY OF  
THE MUSIC OF THE WORLD.

SKAGGS: WHEN BILL HEARD EARL  
PLAY THAT FIERY 3-FINGERED ROLL,

IT WAS THE LAST COG THAT  
THE MACHINE NEEDED TO RUN ON

AND REALLY MAKE THE ENGINE GO.

NARRATOR: MONROE'S NEW SOUND  
NOW FEATURED

INDIVIDUAL SOLO BREAKS  
IN EACH SONG--

WISE'S FURIOUS FIDDLE,  
MONROE'S EXTRAORDINARY MANDOLIN,

AND SCRUGGS' SYNCOPATED BANJO,

WITH FLATT KEEPING PACE  
ON HIS GUITAR

AND PROVIDING  
A STRONG VOCAL LEAD

WHILE MONROE ADDED HIS OWN  
HIGH TENOR HARMONY.

BILL MONROE  
AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS:  
"THERE'S FOLKS BUILDING HOMES

"AS SWEET AS CAN BE...

SKAGGS: IN A COUNTRY BAND,  
THE MUSIC IS BUILT

AROUND THE LEAD SINGER.

THEN YOU HAVE THE BAND  
BACK BEHIND IT.

IN A BLUEGRASS BAND,  
IT'S THE BAND.

THE FIDDLE PLAYER'S AS IMPORTANT  
AS THE MANDOLIN PLAYER.

DON'T TELL MR. MONROE THAT.

BUT THE BANJO PLAYER  
IS EQUALLY AS IMPORTANT

AS THE MANDOLIN PLAYER.

DON'T TELL MR. MONROE THAT.

BUT I'M TELLING YOU,  
IT'S A BAND SOUND.

BILL MONROE, HE NEVER  
MADE IT ABOUT HIM.

BILL MONROE  
AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS:  
â ...FOR ME, A MANSION FOR ME

â A MANSION FOR ME...

McEUEEN: I THINK THAT WHEN MONROE  
HAD LESTER AND EARL WITH HIM,

IT BROUGHT TOGETHER  
THESE ELEMENTS OF GREAT RHYTHM,

HARD-DRIVING, FAST, RAPID  
EIGHTH NOTES THAT WERE CRAZY.

GREAT FIDDLE,  
MONROE'S RHYTHM CHUNKS,

HIS HIGH VOICE, A GREAT HARMONY,  
AND STORIES ABOUT DEAD PEOPLE.

NARRATOR: THANKS TO THEIR  
GRAND OLE OPRY BROADCASTS

AND MONROE'S RELENTLESS SCHEDULE  
OF TOURING THROUGHOUT THE SOUTH,

THE BAND'S STYLE BEGAN  
INFLUENCING OTHER STRING BANDS.

BILL MONROE  
AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS:  
â LORD JESUS IS BUILDING

â A MANSION FOR ME

NARRATOR:  
IN SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA,  
THE STANLEY BROTHERS,

RALPH AND CARTER, WERE PAYING  
PARTICULAR ATTENTION.

THEY HAD BEEN RAISED IN  
THE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH,

WHERE ENTIRE CONGREGATIONS  
SANG HYMNS A CAPPELLA,

LED BY A CHURCH ELDER  
LIKE THEIR FATHER.

ONE OF RALPH STANLEY'S  
EARLIEST MEMORIES

WAS HEARING HIS FATHER'S VOICE

OUTSIDE THEIR HOME  
AS THE DAY ENDED.

MAN: UH, LATE OF THE EVENING,  
OR JUST BEFORE BEDTIME, WHY,

HE'D BE OUT  
WALKING AROUND SOMEWHERE

AND SINGING THE OLD SONGS  
BY HIMSELF.

â I AM A MAN  
OF CONSTANT SORROW â

â I'VE SEEN TROUBLE  
ALL MY DAY â

â I BID FAREWELL  
TO OLD KENTUCKY â

â THE STATE WHERE I WAS  
BORNED AND RAISED â

THAT'S THE WAY  
I LEARNED TO SING.

NARRATOR: THEIR MOTHER  
LOVED THE BANJO,

USING THE OLD  
CLAWHAMMER STYLE,

AND WHEN YOUNG RALPH  
EXPRESSED AN INTEREST

IN LEARNING TO PLAY IT,

SHE TOLD HIM THAT FOR  
AN UPCOMING PRESENT FROM HER,

HE HAD A CHOICE TO MAKE.

STANLEY: WELL, IT WAS  
A BANJO OR A PIG.

I WAS INTERESTED IN HOGS,  
YOU KNOW, AT THAT TIME.

MY AUNT OWNED THEM  
AND SHE WANTED

\$5.00 APIECE FOR  
EITHER ONE OF THEM.

WELL, MY MOTHER TOLD ME,  
SHE SAID,

"NOW, ONE OF THEM  
IS ALL I CAN AFFORD.

SO, YOU PICK THE BANJO  
OR THE PIG."

SO, I PICKED THE BANJO.

THE STANLEY BROTHERS:  
"COME, LITTLE GIRL,  
LET'S GO GET MARRIED..."

NARRATOR: RALPH'S BROTHER CARTER  
PICKED UP THE GUITAR,

AND THE STANLEY BROTHERS  
SOON BEGAN PERFORMING LOCALLY.

THE STANLEY BROTHERS:  
"AT MY WEDDING, MY LITTLE WIFE  
YOU'LL BE"

"OH, WILLIE, DEAR,  
LET'S BOTH CONSIDER"

"WE'RE BOTH TOO YOUNG  
TO BE MARRIED NOW..."

MAN: RALPH'S VOICE SOUNDED  
LIKE IT HAD COAL DUST IN IT

IN A REALLY COOL WAY, AND I LOVE  
THAT BROTHER HARMONY.

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A NUT  
FOR THAT BROTHER HARMONY

THAT RALPH AND CARTER  
HAD TOGETHER.

NARRATOR: AFTER SERVING  
IN THE WAR,

THEY CAME HOME AND FORMED  
THE CLINCH MOUNTAIN BOYS,

BECAME REGULARS  
ON WCYB IN BRISTOL,

AND WENT TO SEE THE MUSICIANS  
THEY ADMIRE THE MOST--

BILL MONROE AND HIS  
BLUE GRASS BOYS.

RALPH WATCHED  
EARL SCRUGGS INTENTLY.

STANLEY: WELL, I SAID,  
I WILL HAVE TO TRY

TO GET THAT STYLE MYSELF.

SO, I STARTED WORKING ON IT.  
HEH HEH.

â€

THE STANLEY BROTHERS:  
â€ O RUN O MOLLY RUN

â€ RUN O MOLLY RUN,  
TENBROOK'S GONNA BEAT YOU â€

â€ TO THE BRIGHT SHINING SUN

â€ BRIGHT SHINING SUN, O LORD,  
THE BRIGHT SHINING SUN... â€

MAN: THE STANLEYS  
WERE JUST STARTING

AND THEY WERE IDOLIZING BILL.

THEY'D LISTEN TO HIM  
ON SATURDAY NIGHT

AND ON THEIR NOON TIME SHOW,  
ON BRISTOL,

THEY'D DO, VERBATIM,  
EVERYTHING HE'D DONE.

IT WAS A TRIBUTE.

BUT IT TICKED BILL OFF BECAUSE

THEY WERE COPYING HIM,  
YOU SEE?

STANLEY: WE SANG  
THE SAME WAY BILL DID,

ONLY IT WAS A DIFFERENT SOUND.

STANLEY SOUND.

NARRATOR: WHEN THE STANLEYS  
RELEASED A SONG OF HIS,

"MOLLY AND TENBROOK,"  
MONROE WAS FURIOUS.

HE HAD RECORDED THE SAME TUNE  
A YEAR EARLIER,

BUT HIS LABEL, COLUMBIA,  
HAD NOT RELEASED IT YET.

THEN COLUMBIA SIGNED  
THE STANLEY BROTHERS;

MONROE RETALIATED BY  
SWITCHING TO DECCA RECORDS.

THERE WERE MORE AGGRAVATIONS.

IN 1948, TWO OF MONROE'S STARS,  
LESTER FLATT AND EARL SCRUGGS,

FRUSTRATED BY HOW LITTLE MONEY  
THEY WERE MAKING,

DECIDED TO STRIKE OUT  
ON THEIR OWN.

THEY EVENTUALLY FORMED  
THEIR OWN BAND,

THE FOGGY MOUNTAIN BOYS.

ONCE AGAIN,  
MONROE WAS INCENSED.

HE CONVINCED THE OPRY  
NOT TO ALLOW FLATT AND SCRUGGS

TO PERFORM THERE FOR YEARS.

WISEMAN: HE KEPT THEM OFF OF  
THE OPRY FOR A LONG TIME.

THAT'S HOW POSSESSIVE HE WAS.

SO, THE WAY THAT  
EVERYBODY DEALT WITH IT

IS NOBODY SPOKE  
FOR LIKE 25 YEARS.

THEY PLAYED AT  
THE GRAND OLE OPRY,

THEY'D WORK AROUND EACH OTHER  
AND, YOU KNOW,

EXIST IN THE SAME INDUSTRY,  
BUT NOBODY SPOKE.

WOMAN: BILL TOLD ME HE'D  
BE BACKSTAGE AT THE OPRY

AND THEY'D BE STANDING THERE  
AND HE'D JUST

WALK ON RIGHT ON INTO THEM,  
LIKE THEY WASN'T EVEN THERE.

I SAID, "WOULDN'T YOU  
SAY NOTHING?"

HE SAID, "NO."

I SAID, "WOULD YOU NOT EVEN  
SAY, 'EXCUSE ME'?"

AND HE SAID, "NO."

WELL, I WOULD LAUGH WHEN HE'D  
TELL ME SOMETHING LIKE THAT

'CAUSE I THOUGHT IT WAS  
SO IMMATURE AND SILLY,

BUT I'D...ANYWAY,  
I THOUGHT IT WAS FUNNY.

NOBODY CAN HOLD A GRUDGE  
LIKE HILLBILLIES.

[LAUGHS]  
I CAN ATTEST TO THAT.

NARRATOR: THEN, DURING A VISIT  
TO FLATT AND SCRUGGS'

STATION IN BRISTOL,  
MONROE STOLE

THEIR SINGER, MAC WISEMAN.

WISEMAN: WELL, RIGHT ON THE AIR,  
MONROE SAID TO ME,

"IF YOU EVER WANT A JOB ON  
THE OPRY, JUST CALL ME."



WELL, IT MADE FLATT  
MIGHTY, MIGHTY ANGRY. [LAUGHS]

NARRATOR: A LITTLE LATER,  
FLATT AND SCRUGGS CAME OUT WITH

AN INSTRUMENTAL SONG  
EARL HAD WRITTEN,

"FOGGY MOUNTAIN BREAKDOWN,"  
NAMED FOR THE NEW BAND.

EXCEPT FOR A FEW CHANGES,  
IT CLOSELY RESEMBLED

A TUNE HE HAD WORKED ON  
WITH MONROE CALLED

"BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN."

STUART: "BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN."

[PLAYING SONG ON MANDOLIN]

WELL, "FOGGY MOUNTAIN  
BREAKDOWN,"

WHEN EARL TOOK IT OUT  
ON THEIR OWN, IT WAS LIKE...

[PLAYING]

ONE CHORD CHANGE.

[PLAYING]

SO...

âa

âa

NARRATOR: IN THE MIDST  
OF ALL THE FEUDING,

AUDIENCE MEMBERS AT  
FLATT AND SCRUGGS CONCERTS

WOULD WANT TO REQUEST  
A BILL MONROE TUNE

DATING FROM THE TIME  
THEY WERE STILL A PART

OF THE BLUE GRASS BOYS.

BUT AS EVERETT LILLY, A MEMBER  
OF THE FOGGY MOUNTAINS BOYS,

RECALLED, THE FANS WERE AFRAID  
EVEN TO MENTION BILL MONROE.

MAN: THE PUBLIC BEGAN TO SAY,  
"BOYS, WOULD YOU PLEASE DO

ONE OF THEM OLD BLUE GRASS TUNES  
LIKE YOU USED TO DO?"

THEY KNEW ME AND LESTER COULD

SING THEM DUETS  
LIKE HIM AND BILL.

THEY'D SAY, "WOULD YOU PLEASE  
DO AN OLD BLUEGRASS TUNE?"

THE PUBLIC NAMED  
BLUEGRASS MUSIC...

THROUGH THE FEAR TO SPEAK  
BILL MONROE'S NAME TO 'EM.

â€"a

â€"a

MADDOX BROTHERS AND ROSE:  
â€"a GOOD MORNING, CAPTAIN

â€"a HOWDY, GAL

â€"a GOOD MORNING, SON

â€"a I'M A-SHINING

â€"a DO YOU NEED ANOTHER  
MULE SKINNER... â€"a

NARRATOR: IN 1948,  
AN OLD JIMMIE RODGERS SONG

GOT A NEW LEASE ON LIFE.

RODGERS, COUNTRY MUSIC'S  
FIRST SUPERSTAR,

ORIGINALLY RECORDED  
"MULE SKINNER BLUES"

IN THE 1920s  
WITH JUST HIS GUITAR.

BILL MONROE HAD MADE

HIS GRAND OLE OPRY DEBUT

WITH A STUNNINGLY ENERGETIC  
REINTERPRETATION OF IT

WITH THE BLUE GRASS BOYS  
BACK IN 1939.

NOW AN ELECTRIFIED BAND OUT IN  
CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL VALLEY

GAVE IT A HONKY-TONK BOUNCE.

IT WAS THE MADDOX BROTHERS  
AND ROSE.

THEY HAD ARRIVED IN CALIFORNIA

IN THE DEPTHS OF  
THE GREAT DEPRESSION,

RIDING FREIGHT TRAINS  
FROM ALABAMA

AND BARELY SURVIVING  
AS MIGRANT FARM WORKERS

BEFORE TAKING UP INSTRUMENTS

AND PUTTING THEIR  
YOUNG SISTER ROSE

IN FRONT OF A MICROPHONE.

THEY WORKED THE BARS  
AND DANCE HALLS

OF THE CENTRAL VALLEY  
PLAYING HILLBILLY MUSIC

FOR OTHERS LIKE THEM,  
ECONOMIC REFUGEES

DENIGRATED AS OKIES.

WHEN HER BROTHERS  
WENT OFF TO WAR,

ROSE HAD APPROACHED  
THE KING OF WESTERN SWING,

BOB WILLS, FOR A JOB.

MAN: AND BOB WILLS  
ALREADY HAD A GIRL SINGER,

SO HE WASN'T INTERESTED

IN USING ROSE IN HIS BAND.

AND THE WAY I HEARD IT,  
THAT ROSE SAID,

"WELL, IF YOU DON'T USE ME,  
YOU'RE GOING TO BE SORRY

"BECAUSE WHEN  
MY BROTHERS GET HOME,

WE'RE GOING TO PUT YOU  
OUT OF BUSINESS." [LAUGHS]

LATER ON, I HEARD  
THAT BOB WILLS

WAS TELLING THAT STORY  
TO SOMEBODY AND HE SAID,

"YOU KNOW, THEY ALMOST DID  
PUT US OUT OF BUSINESS."

NARRATOR: LULA MADDUX,  
THE FAMILY MATRIARCH

AND DRIVING FORCE  
BEHIND THE BAND,

OUTFITTED HER CHILDREN  
IN FLAMBOYANT WESTERN CLOTHES

MADE BY NATHAN TURK,

A POLISH-BORN TAILOR  
IN HOLLYWOOD,

WHO HAD DESIGNED COSTUMES  
FOR MOVIE COWBOYS.

NO ONE HAD EVER SEEN OR HEARD

ANYTHING QUITE LIKE IT BEFORE--

SHOWS THAT INCLUDED  
SLAPSTICK HUMOR,

SHOUTS AND HOLLERS,  
SONGS THAT MIXED

HONKY-TONK AND BOOGIE WOOGIE  
AND THE BLUES,

AN ELECTRIFIED HILLBILLY SOUND  
IN OVERDRIVE.

MADDUX BROTHERS AND ROSE:

â SALLY, LET YOUR BANGS  
HANG DOWN â

STUART: THE WORLD'S MOST  
COLORFUL HILLBILLY BAND.

THEY UNDERSTOOD  
THE ART OF SHOWMANSHIP.

WEARING THESE  
MATCHING COSTUMES,

FANCY COWBOY CLOTHES  
LIKE THEY'D SEEN

THE COWBOY STARS WEAR,

MADE BY MR. NATHAN TURK,

DRIVING MATCHING CADILLACS  
INTO THESE TOWNS.

THEY WOULD BARNSTORM A PLACE.

THEY DIDN'T KNOW IT,  
BUT THEY WERE ROCK STARS

AS WELL AS HILLBILLY STARS  
AND COUNTRY STARS.

MAN: â THAT'S FRIENDLY HENRY,  
THE WORKING GIRL'S FRIEND â

â I WONDER IF SALLY'S  
A WORKING GIRL â

[LAUGHTER]

ROSE: â HOWDY, BOYS

MAN: â NOW I'LL HAVE TO...

MAN: IT WAS LIKE A CIRCUS ACT.

THEY WERE COLORFUL.

THEY WERE FUNNY.

THEY WERE TALENTED.

SOMETIMES, YOU GO SOMEPLACE  
AND YOU WONDER

IF YOU'RE AT  
THE RIGHT PLACE OR NOT.

BUT WHEN YOU WENT TO

THE MADDOX BROTHERS AND ROSE,

YOU KNEW YOU'D COME  
TO THE RIGHT SHOW.

YOU COULD NOT BE AT ONE OF  
THEIR SHOWS AND NOT BE HAPPY.

YOU KNOW, IT--THEY  
JUST WOULDN'T HAVE IT.

MADDOX BROTHERS AND ROSE:  
"SALLY, LET YOUR BANGS  
HANG DOWN"

STUART: THEY WERE THE PRELUDE  
TO ROCK AND ROLL.

THEY PUT THE BOOGIE  
IN COUNTRY MUSIC.

[PLAYING MANDOLIN]

"WELL, ME AND MY BABY  
WALKING DOWN THE STREET"

"TELLING EVERYBODY BUT  
THE CHIEF OF POLICE"

"GOTTA STEP IT UP AND GO

"HEY-YO, STEP IT UP  
AND GO, WHOO!"

"CAN'T STAY, HONEY, BUT YOU  
SURE GOTTA STEP IT UP AND GO"

THE MADDOX BROTHERS AND ROSE.

MAN: LET'S STEP IT UP AND GO.

NARRATOR: BY THE LATE 1940s,  
THE MADDOX BROTHERS AND ROSE

WERE THE HOTTEST  
COUNTRY BAND IN CALIFORNIA.

15 YEARS EARLIER,  
THEY HAD LIVED

IN A CONCRETE CULVERT  
IN OAKLAND.

NOW THEY MOVED INTO  
A LAVISH MANSION IN HOLLYWOOD.

HAGGARD: 1949.

I'D HAVE BEEN 12 YEARS OLD,  
I GUESS,

AND, UH, I HAD AN OLDER BROTHER  
WHO WAS 14 YEARS OLDER THAN ME.

AND HE AND HIS WIFE TOOK ME TO--

TO SEE THE MADDOX BROTHERS  
AND ROSE,

BUT ALSO TO SEE  
THEIR GUITAR PLAYER,

WHO WAS ROY NICHOLS.

SO, I WAS SEEING ONE OF MY  
HEROES FOR THE FIRST TIME.

I REMEMBER MY BROTHER  
MADE THE REMARK, HE SAID,

"HE DON'T HAVE TO PICK COTTON  
OR GO TO SCHOOL, EITHER ONE."

I SAID, "I WANT HIS JOB."

MADDOX BROTHERS AND ROSE:  
â€œ ...GOTTA [INDISTINCT]

â€œ I SWEAR I GOTTA  
STEP IT UP AND GO â€œ

â€œ YEAH

MAN: â€œ WHEN I WAS  
A LITTLE BOY... â€œ

NARRATOR: IN 1948,  
THE GRAND OLE OPRY

WELCOMED A NEW SINGER TO  
THE STAGE AT RYMAN AUDITORIUM.

MAN: â€œ I WOULD HAVE  
TO BE RIGHT STILL â€œ

â€œ UNTIL THE WHOLE CROWD ATE

â€œ MY MAMA ALWAYS SAID TO ME,  
"JIM, TAKE A TATER AND WAIT" â€œ

â€œ NOW, TATERS...

NARRATOR: FROM  
THE COAL-MINING REGION

OF SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA,

THE OLDEST OF 13 CHILDREN,

JAMES CECIL DICKENS  
WAS 28 YEARS OLD

AND HAD BEEN MOVING FROM ONE  
LOCAL RADIO STATION TO ANOTHER,

LEARNING HOW TO  
ENTERTAIN AUDIENCES

AND KEEP A SHOW'S  
SPONSORS HAPPY

BY PERSUADING LISTENERS TO BUY  
WHATEVER WAS BEING ADVERTISED.

STUBBS: THIS COULD BE  
CLOVERINE SALVE;

IT COULD BE BABY CHICKS;  
IT COULD BE LIVER PILLS;

IT COULD BE PRAYER CLOTHS;  
RADIOACTIVE DIRT; ANYTHING.

THAT--AND FOR EVERY ORDER  
THAT CAME IN,

THE ARTIST WOULD RECEIVE  
A SMALL PERCENTAGE.

THEY WERE CALLED THE P.I. DEALS,  
PER INQUIRY.

NARRATOR: NO ONE WAS  
BETTER AT IT THAN DICKENS.

ONLY 4 FEET, 10 INCHES TALL,

HE TURNED HIS SHORT STATURE  
INTO PART OF HIS ACT,

PROMOTING EVERYTHING FROM  
FRUIT TREES TO KITCHEN UTENSILS

TO PATENT MEDICINE.

EARLY IN HIS CAREER,  
HE WOULD STAND ON A CHAIR

TO SHARE THE MICROPHONE  
WITH T. TEXAS TYLER,



AND GLADLY ADOPTED THE NICKNAME  
TYLER GAVE HIM,

LITTLE JIMMY DICKENS.

MAN: AND HE WAS 6 FEET TWO  
AND HERE I WAS

ABOUT 4-10, YOU KNOW.

AND WE MADE A GOOD LITTLE TEAM.

"HERE'S THE LITTLE MAN  
THAT EVERY MOTHER IN AMERICA

WOULD LIKE TO CALL THEIR SON."

DICKENS: "WELL, I THOUGHT  
THAT I'D STARVE TO DEATH

BEFORE MY TIME...

NARRATOR: TO FURTHER  
DISTINGUISH HIMSELF ON STAGE,

DICKENS WENT TO HOLLYWOOD  
FOR FLASHIER CLOTHES.

HE FOUND THEM AT THE MAIN  
COMPETITOR OF NATHAN TURK,

WHO WAS OUTFITTING  
THE MADDOX BROTHERS AND ROSE.

DICKENS: "AN OLD COLD TATER  
AND WAIT

NARRATOR: NUTYA KOTLYRENKO  
HAD BEEN BORN

IN KIEV, IN THE UKRAINE,

BUT CHANGED HIS LAST NAME TO  
COHN WHEN HE CAME TO AMERICA.

CHILDHOOD FRIENDS IN BROOKLYN,

HAVING TROUBLE  
WITH HIS FIRST NAME,

CALLED HIM NUDIE INSTEAD.

NOW HE RAN A TAILOR SHOP  
IN HOLLYWOOD.

LITTLE JIMMY DICKENS  
WAS THE FIRST STAR

FROM THE GRAND OLE OPRY  
TO APPEAR IN

WHAT BECAME KNOWN  
AS NUDIE SUITS.

DICKENS: THE MAIN THING  
IN COUNTRY MUSIC

IS TO SELL YOURSELF  
TO THE AUDIENCE

OTHER THAN JUST  
SINGIN' TO THEM.

'CAUSE IF I HAD TO DEPEND ON  
MY SINGIN', I'D BE UP THE CREEK.

STUBBS: HE DIDN'T GO OUT  
ONSTAGE TO GO OVER.

HE CAME OUT ONSTAGE  
TO TAKE OVER.

AND HE DID EVERY TIME.

AND HE WOULD SAY, "YOU KNOW,  
THEY MAY NOT KNOW WHO I AM NOW,

BUT WHEN I GET DONE WITH THEM,  
THEY WILL."

HE WAS FEARLESS.

DICKENS: "NOW, I'M  
JUST A SIMPLE GUY"

"BUT THERE'S ONE THING  
SURE AS SHOOTIN'..."

NARRATOR: ONE OF LITTLE JIMMY'S  
HITS, "COUNTRY BOY,"

CAME FROM AN UNLIKELY SOURCE.

BOUDLEAUX AND FELICE BRYANT  
WERE HARDLY COUNTRY BUMPKINS.

SHE WAS A SICILIAN-AMERICAN  
FROM MILWAUKEE

WHO LOVED WRITING  
ROMANTIC POETRY.

HE WAS THE SON OF  
A SMALL-TOWN GEORGIA LAWYER

AND HAD BEEN TRAINED AS  
A CLASSICAL VIOLINIST.

MAN: MY FATHER WAS PLAYING AT 18  
IN THE SYMPHONY IN ATLANTA.

PLAYING PAGANINI,  
EVERYTHING ELSE,

BUT THAT DIDN'T PAY  
FOR THE HABITS

AN 18-YEAR-OLD BOY MIGHT

WANT TO DEVELOP IF  
HE HAD ANY MONEY.

AND SO, MY FATHER  
TOOK OFF PLAYING

WITH SOME OF  
THE STRING BAND GROUPS.

HE COULD MAKE 20 BUCKS A NIGHT,

AND YOU COULDN'T MAKE THAT  
IN A WEEK DOING ANYTHING ELSE.

DICKENS: "WHERE I COME FROM,  
OPPORTUNITIES

" THEY NEVER WERE TOO GOOD...

NARRATOR: BOUDLEAUX  
WAS PART OF A QUARTET

WORKING IN THE COCKTAIL LOUNGE  
OF MILWAUKEE'S SCHROEDER HOTEL

WHEN HE BUMPED INTO FELICE.

BRYANT: AND MY MOTHER  
WAS THE ELEVATOR OPERATOR.

SHE TOOK HIM DOWNSTAIRS,  
BOUGHT HIM A DRINK,

AND THEN IMMEDIATELY TOLD HIM

THAT SHE HAD DREAMT OF HIM  
ALL--ALL OF HER LIFE

AND THAT THEY  
SHOULD BE MARRIED.

THEY WERE HITCHED VERY QUICKLY,

OR AT LEAST WERE DOING WHAT

HITCHED PEOPLE USUALLY DO  
VERY QUICKLY.

DICKENS: "SUNDAY,  
I'M A PLAIN, OLD..."

NARRATOR: BUT THEY WOULD  
STRUGGLE TO GET BY,

MOVING FROM TOWN TO TOWN  
WITH THEIR TWO SMALL BOYS

IN A TRAILER THEY PULLED  
BEHIND THEIR CAR.

MEANWHILE, BOUDLEAUX  
BEGAN SETTING

SOME OF FELICE'S POEMS  
TO MUSIC.

WHEN THE HEAD OF  
ACUFF-ROSE PUBLISHING

HEARD THEIR SONG "COUNTRY BOY,"

HE PASSED IT ON  
TO JIMMY DICKENS

AND URGED THE BRYANTS  
TO MOVE TO NASHVILLE.

DICKENS: "OLD GRAY MULE WHEN  
THE SUN COMES UP ON MONDAY"

NARRATOR: LITTLE JIMMY DICKENS  
WOULD RECORD

A NUMBER OF THEIR COMPOSITIONS,

INCLUDING A LOVE SONG FELICE  
HAD WRITTEN FOR BOUDLEAUX

AS A BIRTHDAY PRESENT--  
"WE COULD."

BRYANT: MY MOTHER ALWAYS SAID,  
ABOUT LITTLE JIMMY DICKENS,

AND A LOT OF PEOPLE SAID THIS,

THAT HE COULD SING A BALLAD  
BETTER THAN ANYONE.

"IF ANYONE COULD

FIND THE JOY

THAT TRUE LOVES  
BRINGS A GIRL AND BOY

WE COULD,  
WE COULD, YOU AND I

IF ANYONE COULD  
EVER SAY

THAT THEIR TRUE LOVE  
WAS HERE TO STAY

WE COULD,  
WE COULD, YOU AND I...

BRYANT: HE WASN'T,  
IN SOME WAYS,

EVERYONE'S FAVORITE SINGER,  
BUT HE COULD SELL IT.

"TAKE ME AS I AM,  
OR LET ME GO,"

HE WAS THE FIRST ARTIST  
TO CUT THAT.

THAT WAS ONE OF MY PARENTS'.

AND IT'S BEEN CUT BY EVERYONE  
FROM HIM TO BOB DYLAN.

AND, OF COURSE, "WE COULD,"

WHICH WAS A SONG  
MY MOTHER HAD WRITTEN.

SHE USED TO CRY WHEN  
SHE'D HEAR JIMMY SING IT

'CAUSE HE COULD EMOTE.

NARRATOR: IMPRESSED BY  
THE NUMBER OF HITS  
THEY WERE WRITING,

A NEW YORK PUBLISHER FLEW DOWN  
TO TRY TO PERSUADE THE BRYANTS

TO MOVE TO THE BIG APPLE,

THE NATION'S  
SONGWRITING CAPITAL.

THEY TURNED HIM DOWN.

FELICE AND BOUDLEAUX  
WERE ON THEIR WAY

TO PROVING THAT SONGWRITERS,  
NOT JUST PERFORMERS,

COULD MAKE IT IN NASHVILLE.

WILLIAMS: "GOOD-BYE, JOE,  
AIN'T GOT TO GO"

"ME, OH, MY, OH...

MAN: WHEN HANK WILLIAMS  
CAME TO TOWN,

THAT WAS GOING TO BE  
A BIG DEAL.

I WAS DEFINITELY A BIG FAN.

WILLIAMS: "ME, OH, MY, OH

KENNEDY: I REMEMBER  
GOING DOWN AROUND 5:00  
FOR AN 8:00 SHOW.

WILLIAMS: "FUN ON THE BAYOU

"JAMBALAYA...

KENNEDY: AND IT WAS  
PROBABLY CLOSE TO 10:00

BEFORE THEY BROUGHT HIM OUT.

WE HAD ALL BEEN WAITING.

AND UNFORTUNATELY, HANK HAD  
BEEN OVERSERVED OR SOMETHING.

AND HE DID THE CHORUS  
TO "JAMBALAYA"

3 TIMES AND WALKED OFF.

THAT WAS MY SEEING  
HANK WILLIAMS.

WILLIAMS: "FUN ON THE BAYOU

IT DID NOT BOTHER ME  
IN THE LEAST

THAT THAT'S ALL  
I HAD SEEN.

I HAD SEEN HANK WILLIAMS.

[HORN HONKS]

MAN: IF HANK WOULD  
DRINK A LITTLE BEER,

HE WAS ALL RIGHT.

WHEN HANK, HE GOT  
ON THE HARD STUFF,

DRINKING, YOU DIDN'T  
WANT TO BE AROUND HIM.

NARRATOR: HANK WILLIAMS'  
MARRIAGE TO AUDREY

HAD BEEN TURBULENT  
FROM THE START.

AT THEIR HOME IN MONTGOMERY,  
THERE WERE CONSTANT TENSIONS

ABOUT HER INSISTENCE ON  
BEING PART OF HIS ACT,

TROUBLES OVER MONEY,  
ANGRY FIGHTS

DURING HIS RECURRENT BOUTS  
OF HEAVY DRINKING.

HIS FRIEND JIMMY KEY  
SAW IT FIRSTHAND.

KEY: I HAD AN APARTMENT.

SO, WHEN HANK AND AUDREY  
WOULD HAVE A FIGHT,

HANK WOULD COME  
MOVE IN WITH ME.

I CAME HOME  
FROM WORK FOR LUNCH,

AND HE'S SITTING  
IN THE HALLWAY, AND, UH,

HE WAS JUST  
COMPLETELY SNOOKERED.

AND HE WAS WAILING AWAY  
ON "LOVESICK BLUES."

AND IT TICKED ME OFF.

I DON'T KNOW,  
IT JUST HIT ME WRONG

'CAUSE HE WAS, THE MIDDLE OF  
THE DAY, IN THE JUICE TOO MUCH.

AND HE SAID, "WHAT DO YOU THINK  
ABOUT THIS SONG?"

AND I SAID, "IT AIN'T  
WORTH A DAMN.

IT WON'T SELL 10 RECORDS."

NARRATOR: WILLIAMS' PUBLISHER,  
FRED ROSE,

CONTINUED TO HAVE FAITH  
IN HIS WAYWARD PROTEGÉE.

ROSE, A RECOVERING  
ALCOHOLIC HIMSELF,

HAD DEVELOPED A FATHERLY  
INTEREST IN HANK

AND PLEADED WITH HIM  
TO GIVE UP DRINKING.

BUT WILLIAMS WAS  
UNABLE TO STOP,

AND HIS REPUTATION AS  
AN UNRELIABLE DRUNK SPREAD.

HIS DREAM OF  
GOING BACK TO NASHVILLE

AND PLAYING ON  
THE GRAND OLE OPRY

SEEMED MORE AND MORE  
OUT OF REACH.

THEN, AUDREY FILED FOR DIVORCE.

WILLIAMS: HE CONSTANTLY,  
I THINK,

WAS DEALING  
WITH THE BATTLE OF,

I DON'T WANT TO SAY  
GOOD AND BAD,



BUT MORE LIGHT AND DARK.

HE BELIEVED IN THE REAL  
REDEPTIVE NATURE OF CHRIST

AND THAT, YOU KNOW,  
"I HAVE STRUGGLES

"LIKE EVERYONE ELSE DOES,  
AND I'M A SINNER.

"AND I DO THIS WRONG  
AND DO THIS WRONG,

BUT, YOU KNOW, I HAVE FAITH  
IN MY SALVATION."

AND HE WROTE  
MANY SONGS ABOUT THAT.

NARRATOR: ONCE,  
WILLIAMS HAD BEEN

IN THE BACK SEAT OF  
HIS BAND'S TOURING CAR,

SLEEPING OFF  
YET ANOTHER BENDER,

WHEN HIS MOTHER,  
WHO WAS DRIVING,

SAW THE BEACON LIGHT  
OF MONTGOMERY'S AIRPORT  
IN THE DISTANCE

AND TRIED TO ROUSE HIM  
FROM HIS STUPOR.

"HANK, WAKE UP,"  
SHE SHOUTED.

"WE'RE NEARLY HOME.  
I JUST SAW THE LIGHT."

BY THE TIME THEY ARRIVED,  
HE HAD TURNED IT INTO A SONG,

CLOSELY BASED ON A GOSPEL TUNE  
CALLED "HE SET ME FREE."

WILLIAMS: "I SAW THE LIGHT."

EVERYONE KNOWS IT,  
EVERYONE LOVES IT.

SLAP YOUR HIP, WHETHER YOU LOVE

JESUS OR NOT,

WHETHER YOU'RE  
RELIGIOUS OR NOT,

IT'S A SONG THAT JUST  
STICKS IN YOUR HEAD LIKE GLUE,

YOU KNOW, AND YOU  
CAN'T STOP SINGING IT.

IT'S HAPPY.  
IT'S UP-TEMPO.

AT THE SAME TIME,  
IT'S A SONG OF REDEMPTION

AND THIS BROKEN MAN  
WHO HAS SEEN THE LIGHT.

WILLIAMS: â PRAISE  
THE LORD, I SAW THE LIGHT â

â I SAW THE LIGHT,  
I SAW THE LIGHT â

â NO MORE DARKNESS,  
NO MORE NIGHT â

â NOW I'M SO HAPPY,  
NO SORROW INSIDE â

â PRAISE THE LORD,  
I SAW THE LIGHT... â

CROWELL: AND YOU GO  
HOWLING AT THE MOON

ON FRIDAY AND SATURDAY NIGHT.

YOU WRECK YOUR CAR.

YOU KNOW, YOU CHASE WOMEN.  
YOU COME IN DRUNK.

BUT THEN, SUNDAY MORNING,  
YOU FACE THE MUSIC

'CAUSE SOMEBODY'S MAMA  
AND SOMEBODY'S FAVORITE AUNT

IS GOING TO GRAB YOU BY THE EAR  
AND DRAG YOU OUT OF THAT BED

AND TAKE YOU TO CHURCH.

EVERYBODY OUT THERE WHO'S HAD

SATURDAY NIGHT  
AND SUNDAY MORNING CAN SAY,

"HE'S TELLING US  
ABOUT OUR LIVES."

AND WHEN YOU GET IT RIGHT,

WHEN AN ARTIST GETS IT RIGHT  
FOR THEMSELVES,

IT'S RIGHT FOR EVERYBODY.

WILLIAMS: "NOW I'M SO HAPPY,  
NO SORROW IN SIGHT"

"PRAISE THE LORD,  
I SAW THE LIGHT"

NARRATOR: BY THE TIME  
THEIR DIVORCE WAS FINALIZED

IN MAY OF 1948,

HANK AND AUDREY  
HAD ALREADY RECONCILED.

HANK HAD SOBERED UP,  
AND FRED ROSE SOON GOT HIM

A SPOT ON A NEW RADIO PROGRAM,  
THE LOUISIANA HAYRIDE,

BROADCAST FROM SHREVEPORT'S  
MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM.

IT HOPED TO OUTDO  
THE GRAND OLE OPRY

AND WAS SEARCHING  
FOR NEW TALENT.

HANK WILLIAMS QUICKLY BECAME  
THE SHOW'S TOP STAR,

AND HIS MOST POPULAR SONG  
ON ITS STAGE

WAS THE ONE HE HAD PLAYED FOR  
JIMMY KEY OUTSIDE HIS APARTMENT,

EMMETT MILLER'S OLD HIT,  
"LOVESICK BLUES."

DESPITE THE VEHEMENT OBJECTIONS  
OF FRED ROSE, WHO CALLED IT

"THE WORST DAMN THING  
I EVER HEARD,"

WILLIAMS INSISTED  
ON RECORDING IT.

"YOU MIGHT NOT LIKE THE SONG,"  
HANK TOLD ROSE,

"BUT WHEN I WALK  
OFF THE STAGE

"AND THROW MY HAT  
BACK ON THE STAGE

AND THE HAT ENCORES,  
THAT'S PRETTY HOT."

MAN: "I'VE GOT A FEELING  
CALLED THE BLUES, OH, LORD "

" SINCE MY BABY WENT AWAY

THAT SONG, " I DON'T KNOW  
WHAT I'M GOING TO DO... "

THERE'S A SENTIMENTAL HEARTACHE  
TO THAT SONG, BUT YET,

THERE'S STILL A RAW-EDGED  
KIND OF RAUCOUS,

MUD IN YOUR EYE, FLIPPING  
THE FINGER AT THE WORLD

BECAUSE YOU FEEL  
THIS BAD SIDE OF IT.

" HEY, LORD, I'VE GOT 'EM

" I'VE GOT  
THE LOVESICK BLUES "

THERE'S JUST SOMETHING ABOUT--  
IT'S STILL,

BUT THERE'S AN EDGE TO IT.

IT'S ROCKING. ANYWAY.

WILLIAMS: " I GOT A FEELING  
CALLED THE BLUES, OH, LORD "

" SINCE MY BABY  
SAID GOOD-BYE "

â LORD, I DON'T KNOW  
WHAT I'LL DO â

â ALL I DO IS SIT  
AND SIGH, OH, LORD â

â THAT LAST LONG DAY  
SHE SAID GOOD-BYE â

â BUT, LORD, I THOUGHT  
I WOULD CRY â

â SHE'LL DO ME,  
SHE'LL DO YOU â

â SHE'S GOT THAT  
KIND OF LOVIN' â

â LORD, I LOVE TO HEAR HER  
WHEN SHE CALLS ME SWEET DADDY â

â SUCH A BEAUTIFUL DREAM...

NARRATOR: WITHIN A FEW MONTHS  
OF ITS RELEASE IN EARLY 1949,

IT WAS THE NATION'S NUMBER-ONE  
HILLBILLY SONG

AND WOULD STAY ON THE CHARTS  
FOR NEARLY A YEAR.

HANK WILLIAMS' ERRATIC CAREER  
HAD TURNED AROUND.

AND AUDREY HAD GIVEN BIRTH

TO A CHILD OF THEIR OWN--  
HANK WILLIAMS, JR.

WILLIAMS: â I GOT  
THE LOVESICK BLUES... â

NARRATOR: WITH HIS  
NEWFOUND SUCCESS,

WILLIAMS SET HIS SIGHTS  
ON THE GRAND OLE OPRY.

ON JUNE 11, 1949,  
HE MADE HIS DEBUT,

SINGING "LOVESICK BLUES"  
TO SUCH THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE

HE WAS QUICKLY ASKED  
TO BECOME A MEMBER.

WILLIAMS: "BUT SHE  
JUST WOULDN'T STAY..."

NARRATOR: THE WILLIAMS FAMILY  
NOW MOVED TO NASHVILLE,

TO A NEW HOUSE ON 3 ACRES.

THEY FILLED IT WITH FURNITURE  
SO EXPENSIVE, HANK SAID

HE WAS AFRAID TO SIT ON IT.

IN NOVEMBER, THOUGH STILL

A RELATIVE NEWCOMER  
TO THE OPRY,

HE WAS ASKED TO JOIN  
OTHER HEADLINERS

ON A TWO-WEEK TOUR OF AMERICAN  
MILITARY BASES IN EUROPE.

THE CAST INCLUDED  
ROY ACUFF, MINNIE PEARL,

AND LITTLE JIMMY DICKENS.

WILLIAMS: "LORD, I THOUGHT  
I WOULD CRY"

"SHE'LL DO ME,  
SHE'LL DO YOU"

"SHE'S GOT THAT  
KIND OF LOVIN'"

"LORD, I LOVE TO HEAR HER  
WHEN SHE CALLS ME SWEET DADDY"

"SUCH A BEAUTIFUL..."

NARRATOR: IN BERLIN,  
HANK WAS ISSUED

A DOCUMENT  
WRITTEN IN RUSSIAN,

IN CASE HE ENDED UP  
IN THE SOVIET-CONTROLLED ZONE.

"THEY AIN'T GONNA WIN  
THE NEXT WAR,"

HE SAID WHEN HE SAW IT.

"THEY CAN'T EVEN SPELL."

BACK HOME, AS 1949 ENDED,

HANK WILLIAMS WAS  
THE SECOND-BEST-SELLING

COUNTRY SINGER OF THE YEAR,  
WITH 8 SONGS ON THE CHARTS.

ONLY EDDY ARNOLD, WITH 13,  
WAS AHEAD OF HIM.

WILLIAMS:  
"âa ...LOVESICK BLUES

MAN: MY FEELING  
IS THAT PEOPLE

WHO BOUGHT RECORDS  
CALLED RACE RECORDS

AND PEOPLE WHO BOUGHT RECORDS  
CALLED HILLBILLY RECORDS

WERE OFFENDED  
BY THOSE TERMS.

AND THE RECORD COMPANIES  
FINALLY GOT A CLUE.

NARRATOR: FROM  
THE VERY FIRST RECORDINGS

OF FIDDLIN' JOHN CARSON  
BACK IN 1923,

RECORD LABELS HAD TROUBLE  
NAMING THE MUSIC

THAT HAD SPRUNG FROM  
SO MANY DIFFERENT ROOTS.

MOST PEOPLE REFERRED TO IT  
AS "HILLBILLY MUSIC,"

AND "BILLBOARD" MAGAZINE  
USED THAT TERM FOR A WHILE.

BY THE 1940s, THE GROWTH  
OF ADDITIONAL STYLES--

WESTERN SWING,  
HONKY-TONK, BLUEGRASS--

MADE CATEGORIZING IT

EVEN MORE DIFFICULT,

AND BILLBOARD'S FIRST  
POPULARITY CHARTS

LUMPED IT ALL  
UNDER THE BROAD TITLE

OF "FOLK RECORDS."

FEW ARTISTS SEEMED TO MIND.

HANK WILLIAMS CALLED HIS SONGS  
FOLK MUSIC,

THOUGH HE WAS  
EQUALLY COMFORTABLE

REFERRING TO HIMSELF  
AS A HILLBILLY.

BUT ERNEST TUBB  
AND THE SINGER RED FOLEY

PUSHED FOR  
SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

AND ON JUNE 25, 1949,  
WHEN BILLBOARD

DROPPED THE TERM  
"RACE MUSIC"

AND SUBSTITUTED  
"RHYTHM AND BLUES,"

IT ADDED A NEW CATEGORY--  
"COUNTRY AND WESTERN."

SLOWLY, THE TERM  
"FOLK MUSIC"

BEGAN TO DESCRIBE  
SONGS PERFORMED BY GROUPS

MORE LIKELY TO BE BASED  
IN NEW YORK CITY.

THOUGH THEY INCLUDED  
OLD STANDARDS,

THERE WERE ALSO  
SONGS OF SOCIAL PROTEST

THAT BOTHERED SOME MORE  
CONSERVATIVE LISTENERS,



ESPECIALLY SINCE  
THE UNITED STATES

WAS LOCKED IN A COLD WAR  
AGAINST INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM.

CAUGHT UP IN THE ANTI-COMMUNIST  
BACKLASH WAS WOODY GUTHRIE.

GUTHRIE: "A BAD, BAD, BAD,  
AND I AIN'T... A"

NARRATOR: "I AIN'T A COMMUNIST  
NECESSARILY," GUTHRIE SAID,

"BUT I'VE BEEN IN THE RED  
ALL MY LIFE."

STUART: SOMEBODY  
HAD TO CLAIM WOODY.

AND THE FOLK MUSIC COMMUNITY  
CLAIMED HIM.

COUNTRY MUSIC MISSED,  
'CAUSE, IN MY MIND,

WHEN I LISTEN  
TO WOODY GUTHRIE,

HE'S ONE OF THE PUREST  
COUNTRY ARTISTS

THAT GOD EVER MADE.

COME ON.

I MEAN, YOU LISTEN  
TO THOSE EARLY RECORDINGS,

ANYTHING THAT WOODY  
EVER DID, HE'S COUNTRY.

I'M SORRY POLITICS GOT  
IN SOME PEOPLE'S MINDS

AND GOT IN THE WAY.

TAKE IT TO THE MUSIC.  
PUT IT ON THE MUSIC.

SHINE THE LIGHT ON THE MUSIC  
AND WHAT THE MAN WROTE.

UH, MIGHTY POWERFUL.

"DEPORTEE," "THIS LAND

IS YOUR LAND,"

JUST START THERE AND KEEP GOING  
TO THE END OF THE LINE.

THERE YOU HAVE COUNTRY MUSIC.

GUTHRIE: " ...THIS WAY

" AND I AIN'T GONNA BE  
TREATED THIS WAY "

" LORD, GOD, I AIN'T  
GONNA BE TREATED THIS WAY "

[RADIO STATIC]

RADIO ANNOUNCER:  
THE GRAND OLE OPRY

IS THE BIG TALK  
OF FOLK MUSIC...

NARRATOR: ONE DAY IN 1950,  
AS A WSM ANNOUNCER

INTRODUCED A POPULAR  
MORNING PROGRAM,

HE IMPROVISED A LITTLE.

[MAN SINGING]

NARRATOR: THE SHOW, HE SAID,  
WAS COMING FROM

"MUSIC CITY USA,  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE."

IT WAS MORE AN OFF-HAND COMMENT  
THAN A STATEMENT OF FACT,

BUT FOR MORE AND MORE  
COUNTRY ARTISTS,

NASHVILLE HAD BECOME  
THE PROMISED LAND

THEY ALL WANTED TO REACH.

THAT NOW INCLUDED  
4 MEMBERS OF

THE FIRST FAMILY  
OF COUNTRY MUSIC.

" I GOT A MAN,

SWEET TALKING MAN ♪

♪ SWEET TALKING'S  
ALL FOR ME ♪

♪ I GOT A MAN,  
SWEET TALKING MAN ♪

♪ SWEET TALKING MAN

♪ I CAN'T BE FREE

♪ AND I DON'T CARE IF  
HE HASN'T GOT A DIME ♪

♪ ALL I NEED TO KNOW  
IS THAT ♪

ALL: ♪ HE'S ALL MINE

♪ I GOT A MAN,  
SWEET TALKING MAN ♪

♪ SWEET TALKING'S  
ALL FOR ME ♪

♪ I GOT A MAN...

McEUN: I WAS ASKING MAYBELLE  
ONE NIGHT IN KNOXVILLE,

SHE WAS DOING A SOUND CHECK,  
AND SHE HAD THE AUTOHARP

AND SHE'S TRYING  
TO GET IT LOUDER,

AND IT'S STARTING TO FEEDBACK  
AND I SAID,

"MAYBELLE, WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN  
YOU HAVE TROUBLE WITH THAT MIC?"

"OH, I JUST DO WHAT  
I TELL THE GIRLS TO DO

"WHEN THEY HAVE TROUBLE  
WITH THE MIC,

JUST SMILE REAL LOUD."

GOOD ADVICE.

♪ I GOT A MAN,  
SWEET TALKING MAN ♪

♪ SWEET TALKING'S

ALL FOR ME

YES, HIS

SWEET TALKING'S  
ALL FOR ME

I SAID HIS

SWEET TALKING'S  
ALL FOR ME

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

NARRATOR: BACK IN 1927,  
MAYBELLE CARTER HAD BEEN

PART OF THE ORIGINAL  
CARTER FAMILY

WHEN THEY MADE THEIR  
GROUNDBREAKING RECORDINGS

IN BRISTOL, TENNESSEE.

NOW SHE WAS PERFORMING  
WITH HER 3 DAUGHTERS.

MAN: HELEN CARTER  
WAS THE INSTRUMENTALIST  
IN THE GROUP.

SHE PLAYED ACOUSTIC GUITAR,  
SHE PLAYED THE ACCORDION.

SHE ALSO SANG.

SHE WAS A WONDERFUL  
GUITAR PLAYER,

AS STRONG AS HER MOTHER,  
IN HER OWN STYLE.

ANITA WAS THE YOUNGEST  
OF THE CARTER SISTERS.

ANITA HAD THE MOST BEAUTIFUL,  
PITCH-PERFECT,

CLEAR SOPRANO VOICE.

MY MOTHER, THE MIDDLE CHILD,  
JUNE CARTER,

WAS NOT THE VOCALIST  
THAT HER SISTER ANITA WAS.

MY MOTHER HAD THIS ENERGY  
AND THIS VIBRANCE

AND THIS VITALITY  
THAT CAME THROUGH

WITH EVERYTHING SHE DID.

WOMAN: MY MOM WAS BORN  
AN ENTERTAINER.

SHE HAD A GREAT  
COMEDIC SENSE.

AND MOM MADE HERSELF OUT TO BE  
NOT AS GOOD A SINGER AS SHE WAS

BECAUSE HER SISTERS TEASED HER  
ALL THE TIME

THAT SHE COULDN'T SING  
AS GOOD AS THEM.

SO, MAMA KIND OF  
TURNED IT INTO AN ACT,

YOU KNOW, WHERE SHE'D GO  
â I'M AMMMMAAA MEEEE MEEEE...

AND PEOPLE WOULD  
CRACK UP LAUGHING.

SO, SHE WOULD JUST  
GO ON WITH IT,

TRYING TO FIND HER NOTE.

SHE KNEW EXACTLY  
WHERE IT WAS.

CARTERS SISTERS AND MOTHER  
MAYBELLE: â LITTLE DARLING,  
PAL OF MINE â

RADIO ANNOUNCER:  
AND NOW, FOLKS, IT'S TIME--

GIRL: WHAT YOU  
TRYING TO DO ANYHOW,

JOE, INSULT ME  
OR SOMETHING OTHER?

NO, I'M JUST TRYING  
TO TELL THE FOLKS  
WHO YOU ARE.

OH, THERE AIN'T  
NO SENSE IN THAT.

THAT TAKES UP  
TOO MUCH TIME.

I'M JUST MOMMY MAYBELLE'S  
MIDDLE-SIZED YOUNGIN',

LITTLE OL' PUNY JUNEY,

AND I AIM TO DO  
A LITTLE SINGING HERE

IF YOU-INS  
WON'T RUN OFF.

IF I CAN GET EVERYBODY  
TO HELP ME OUT,

WE GOT AN OLD TIMER  
HERE CALLED "I'LL BE  
BACK FOR SUNDAY."

â MY LITTLE PEA PATCH  
SWEETHEART â

â YOU'RE CUTE AS  
PUMPKIN SEEDS... â

NARRATOR: IN 1948,  
THE CARTERS HAD LANDED A JOB

ON THE MIDDAY MERRY-GO-ROUND  
ON KNOXVILLE'S WNOX

AND ASKED A GIFTED YOUNG  
GUITARIST TO JOIN THE ENSEMBLE.

HIS PLAYING STYLE,  
MUCH DIFFERENT FROM MAYBELLE'S

DISTINCTIVE "CARTER SCRATCH,"

LEANED MORE TOWARD JAZZ  
THAN OLD-TIME COUNTRY MUSIC.

JUNE: WHOO-HOO!

NARRATOR:  
CHESTER ATKINS CAME FROM

THE REMOTE HOLLOWES  
OF EAST TENNESSEE,

WHERE HE HAD MADE  
HIS OWN CRYSTAL SET

TO HEAR MUSIC  
ON LOCAL RADIO STATIONS.

PAINFULLY SHY AND SICKLY  
AS A BOY,

HE HAD TAKEN UP  
THE FIDDLE AND THEN GUITAR,

DRAWN TO THE STYLINGS OF  
JAZZ GUITARIST DJANGO REINHARDT

AND THE INFLUENTIAL  
FINGER PICKING

OF KENTUCKY'S MERLE TRAVIS,  
WHO HAD ESTABLISHED HIMSELF

AS A TOP SESSION MUSICIAN  
ON THE WEST COAST.

JUNE: "I'LL BE BACK  
SUNDAY"

WE ARE FIXING TO HEAR  
FROM CHESTER ATKINS.

HE'S GONNA INTRODUCE  
SOME REAL FANCY GUITAR PICKING.

[GUITAR MUSIC]

GILL: HE WAS SUCH A STICKLER  
FOR THE MELODY,

WHICH I ALWAYS  
ADMIRE ABOUT CHET.

YOU ALWAYS COULD  
HEAR THE MELODY,

AND HE WAS NOT THE KIND  
OF GUITAR PLAYER

THAT WAS PLAYING YOU  
ALL KINDS OF FLASHY STUFF.

HIS--EVERYTHING HE PLAYED,  
AS HARD AS IT WAS,

STILL WAS CENTERED  
VERY MUCH AROUND THE MELODY.

THERE'S A GREAT STORY ABOUT CHET  
IN THE DAY WHEN SOME MUSICIAN,

THEY WERE WORKING ON SOMETHING,  
AND THE MUSICIAN SAID,

"I REALLY DON'T KNOW  
WHAT TO PLAY HERE, CHET."

CHET JUST SIMPLY SAID,  
"THE MELODY USUALLY WORKS."

[LAUGHS]

NARRATOR: DESPITE  
HIS VIRTUOSITY,

ATKINS HAD BEEN HAVING TROUBLE  
MAKING A LIVING,

BOUNCING FROM ONE  
RADIO STATION TO ANOTHER,

FIRE BECAUSE HIS MUSIC WASN'T  
CONSIDERED HILLBILLY ENOUGH

FOR THEIR AUDIENCES.

HE WAS FEELING  
DEFEATED WHEN

THE CARTER SISTERS  
AND MOTHER MAYBELLE

OFFERED HIM AN EQUAL SHARE  
OF THEIR RECEIPTS

IF HE WOULD BECOME  
PART OF THEIR ACT.

THE COMBINATION OF HIS  
BLUESY GUITAR PLAYING,

THE CARTERS' FIRM GROUNDING IN  
TRADITIONAL APPALACHIAN BALLADS,

AND JUNE'S  
EFFERVESCENT PERSONALITY

WAS AN IMMEDIATE SUCCESS.

[GUITAR PLAYING]

IN 1949, THEY ALL  
MOVED TO A STATION

IN SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI,  
WHERE THEY BECAME

THE FEATURED ATTRACTION ON



A NATIONALLY SYNDICATED SHOW

SPONSORED BY RED STAR FLOUR.

WHEN THE COMPANY'S  
SALES INCREASED,

ITS MAIN COMPETITOR,  
THE MARTHA WHITE FLOUR COMPANY,

WHICH SPONSORED A SEGMENT  
ON THE GRAND OLE OPRY,

PRESSURED WSM TO FINALLY BRING  
THE CARTERS TO NASHVILLE.

IT WAS AN OFFER EVERY  
COUNTRY MUSICIAN DREAMED OF.

BUT THERE WAS A PROBLEM.

THEY WERE TOLD THEY COULDN'T  
BRING CHET ATKINS WITH THEM.

CARTER CASH:  
THEY SAID, "PLEASE COME,

BUT DON'T BRING  
THAT GUITAR PLAYER,"

AND THE REASONING BEHIND THIS,  
ACCORDING TO MY MOTHER,

WAS THAT THE GRAND OLE OPRY  
WAS CONCERNED THAT

CHET WOULD COME TO NASHVILLE  
AND BASICALLY TAKE OVER.

CARTER: THE OPRY GUYS  
DIDN'T WANT CHET AROUND

BECAUSE HE HAD  
SOMETHING TO OFFER.

AND HE WAS GOING TO TAKE  
SOME WORK AWAY FROM THEM.

CARTER CASH: MY GRANDFATHER  
AND GRANDMOTHER SAID,

"THANK YOU VERY MUCH, WE'RE  
GOING TO STAY IN SPRINGFIELD.

WE'RE NOT INTERESTED IN COMING  
IF WE CAN'T BRING CHESTER."

NARRATOR: THE OPRY  
SWEETENED ITS OFFER.

STILL, THE CARTERS HELD OUT.

CARTER: GRANDMA HAD TAKEN CHET  
KIND OF UNDER HER WING.

AND THE GIRLS,  
THEY ADORED CHET.

GRANDMA STOOD UP FOR HIM  
AND SAID,

"NO, CHESTER'S COMING."

NARRATOR:  
WSM FINALLY GAVE IN.

THE CARTER SISTERS  
AND MOTHER MAYBELLE,

WITH CHET ATKINS, DEBUTED ON  
THE OPRY IN SEPTEMBER 1950.

"THE ROOF," JUNE RECALLED,  
"CAME OFF THAT BUILDING."

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

NASHVILLE WOULD BECOME  
THE CARTERS' HOME,

AND CHET ATKINS' HOME, TOO.

HE WOULD BECOME ONE OF THE MOST  
SOUGHT-AFTER GUITAR PLAYERS

IN MUSIC CITY,

JUST AS THE OTHER  
MUSICIANS HAD FEARED.

WILLIAMS: "HEAR THAT  
LONESOME WHIP-POOR-WILL..."

STUART: SONGWRITING IS THE MOST  
MYSTERIOUS OF ALL THE TRADES.

IT CANNOT BE EXPLAINED.

THERE'S A CRAFT THAT  
GOES ALONG WITH IT.

BUT AT THE SAME TIME,  
IT'S THE DIVINE GIFT.

IT'S THAT THING  
YOU CAN'T EXPLAIN.

WILLIAMS: "I'M SO  
LONESOME I COULD CRY"

"I'VE NEVER SEEN...

STUART: I GUESS HE SAID IT BEST  
WHEN SOMEBODY ASKED HIM,

"HANK, HOW DO YOU WRITE  
THEM OLD SAD SONGS?"

HE SAYS, "HOSS,  
I DON'T WRITE 'EM.

I JUST HANG ONTO THE PEN  
AND GOD SENDS THEM THROUGH."

THE WAY I SEE IT, IF YOU'RE  
COLLABORATING WITH GOD,

THE CREATOR, WHO MADE  
THE MOUNTAINS AND THE STARS

AND THE MOON,  
AND THE SKY, YOU KNOW,

A 3-MINUTE COUNTRY SONG IS NOT  
THAT BIG OF A STRETCH, BUT, UM,

THOSE KIND OF SONGS, LIKE  
"I'M SO LONESOME I COULD CRY,"

"YOUR CHEATIN' HEART,"  
UNEXPLAINABLE.

LEE: "CAN YOU HEAR THAT  
LONESOME WHIP-POOR-WILL?"

"HE SOUNDS  
TOO BLUE TO FLY"

NOW, WHAT A LINE IS THAT?

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT OF A BIRD  
BEIN' TOO BLUE TO FLY?

APPARENTLY HANK DID.

WILLIAMS: "HAVE YOU SEEN  
A ROBIN WEEP?"

WILLIAMS: HANK WAS SAYING, "HEAR  
THAT LONESOME WHIP-POOR-WILL.

"HE SOUNDS TOO BLUE TO FLY.

"THE MIDNIGHT TRAIN  
IS WHINING LOW,

I'M SO LONESOME I COULD CRY."

SO, IT'S THIS  
STUNNING, BEAUTIFUL,

HEARTBREAKING LONELINESS,  
BUT IT'S--

IT'S SIMPLE ENOUGH  
ENGLISH, BUT IT'S JUST  
PUT TOGETHER IN

THESE LITTLE, PERFECT LITTLE  
MAZES OF WORDS THAT JUST CUT

RIGHT AT YOUR HEART,  
YOU KNOW?

WILLIAMS:  
â€”a ...OF A FALLING STAR

â€”a LIGHTS UP A PURPLE SKY

â€”a AND AS I WONDER  
WHERE YOU ARE â€”a

â€”a I'M SO LONESOME  
I COULD CRY â€”a

NARRATOR: LIKE JIMMIE RODGERS,  
HANK WILLIAMS COULD NEITHER

READ NOR WRITE  
MUSICAL NOTATIONS.

BUT HE WAS NOW CRANKING OUT  
HIT AFTER HIT.

"HIS SECRET," HE SAID,  
"CAN BE EXPLAINED

IN JUST ONE WORD--  
SINCERITY."

WILLIAMS:  
â€”a I WENT DOWN TO THE RIVER

TO WATCH THE FISH  
SWIM BY... â€”a

NARRATOR: MOST OF HIS SONGS  
WERE HONKY-TONK.

WILLIAMS:

â BUT I GOT TO THE RIVER

â SO LONESOME I WANTED  
TO DIE, OH, LORD... â

NARRATOR: AND HE DREW ADORING  
CROWDS WHEREVER HE WENT.

"HE HELD THEM IN  
THE PALM OF HIS HAND,"

ONE OF THE DRIFTING COWBOYS  
REMEMBERED.

"ONCE HANK WALKED OUT THERE

AND CURLED UP AROUND  
THAT MICROPHONE," HE ADDED,

"A NAKED LADY COULD HAVE RODE  
AN AFRICAN ELEPHANT BEHIND HIM

AND WOULDN'T NOBODY  
HAVE SEEN HER."

CROWELL: MY FATHER'S  
DREAM IN LIFE

WAS THAT HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN  
HANK WILLIAMS.

HE TOOK ME TO SEE  
HANK WILLIAMS'

NEXT-TO-LAST PERFORMANCE  
IN HOUSTON.

IT WAS DECEMBER 14, 1952.

WE WENT, AND I WAS  
ON HIS SHOULDERS,

AND I REALLY THINK IT IS  
MY SECOND MEMORY IN LIFE.

BUT THE MEMORY WAS ALL--

WAS MADE MORE VIVID  
AND MORE REAL

THAT MY FATHER WOULD  
CONSTANTLY REMIND ME,

"DON'T FORGET, I TOOK YOU  
TO SEE HANK WILLIAMS.

I TOOK YOU TO SEE  
THE HILLBILLY SHAKESPEARE."

WILLIAMS:  
"AND NOW

" I'M LONESOME BLUES

NARRATOR: AT THE END  
OF EACH TOUR,

HANK WOULD RETURN WITH  
A SUITCASE BULGING WITH MONEY

THAT HE EMPTIED ONTO  
THE CASHIER'S COUNTER

AT HIS NASHVILLE BANK.

THEN HE AND AUDREY SPENT IT  
AS FAST AS THEY COULD.

SHE BOUGHT THEM  
HIS AND HERS CADILLACS.

HE LEFT EXTRAVAGANT TIPS  
AT RESTAURANTS,

SENT MONEY TO PEOPLE  
WHO WROTE HIM

WITH HARD-LUCK STORIES.

TOGETHER, THEY OPENED  
A CLOTHING STORE

IN DOWNTOWN NASHVILLE NEAR  
ERNEST TUBB'S RECORD STORE.

WILLIAMS WAS  
CONSTANTLY COMPOSING,

WRITING NEW LYRICS  
WHILE HE TRAVELED--

ON SCRAPS OF PAPER HE STUFFED  
INTO HIS WALLET,

ON HOTEL STATIONERY,  
EVEN ON THE CARDBOARD

THAT CAME WITH  
HIS PRESSED SHIRTS.

BACKSTAGE AT THE OPRY,

WHERE HE AS NOW  
THE SHOW'S BIGGEST STAR,

HE WOULD SOMETIMES TRY OUT  
A NEW SONG FOR OTHER ARTISTS

AND ASK IF THEY WANTED IT.

IF THEY REALLY LIKED IT, HE  
WOULD USUALLY RECORD IT HIMSELF.

JIMMY DICKENS GOT THE TREATMENT  
WHEN HE WAS ON TOUR

WITH WILLIAMS  
AND MINNIE PEARL.

DICKENS: HE SAID,  
"YOU NEED A HIT."

I SAID, "WELL, WHO DOESN'T?"

[LAUGHS]

HE SAID, "LET'S JUST  
WRITE YOU ONE RIGHT NOW.

YOU GOT ANY PAPER?"

AND MINNIE PEARL REACHED IN  
HER GLOVE COMPARTMENT

AND GAVE HIM  
A LITTLE PAD OF PAPER,

AND HE GAVE ME A PEN AND HE  
SAID, "NOW, WRITE THIS DOWN."

AND HE'D QUOTE ME  
ONE LINE AT A TIME,

ONE LINE AT A TIME.

AND IN 15 MINUTES, HE HAD  
WRITTEN "HEY, GOOD LOOKIN'."

AND HE SAID, "NOW,  
YOU RECORD THIS,

AND IT'LL MAKE YOU A HIT."

I SAID, "AS SOON AS I  
CAN GET IN THE STUDIO,  
IT'LL BE PUT DOWN."

ABOUT A WEEK LATER, HE SAID,  
"I RECORDED YOUR SONG TODAY."

I SAID, "WHEN IT HITS,  
YOU'LL KNOW THAT IT'S MINE."

HE SAID IT WITH A SMILE.

MAN: HANK WILLIAMS!

JUNE: GO RIGHT THERE!

COME HERE, HANK.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

JUNE, HONEY,  
I GOT A SONG I WROTE

JUST ESPECIALLY FOR YOU  
I'M GONNA SING HERE.

JUST FOR YOU.

WHAT IS IT?

IT'S CALLED  
"HEY, GOOD LOOKIN'."

OHH!

â€ SAID, HEY, GOOD LOOKIN'

â€ WHATCHA GOT COOKIN'?

â€ HOW'S ABOUT COOKIN'  
SOMETHING UP WITH ME? â€

â€ SAY, HEY, SWEET BABY

â€ DON'T YOU THINK MAYBE...

NARRATOR: "HEY, GOOD LOOKIN'"  
WOULD BE ANOTHER

NUMBER-ONE HIT  
FOR HANK WILLIAMS.

â€ I GOT A HOT ROD FORD  
AND A \$2.00 BILL â€

â€ AND I KNOW A SPOT  
RIGHT OVER THE HILL â€

â€ THERE'S SODA POP  
AND THE DANCIN' IS FREE â€

â€ SO IF YOU WANT TO HAVE  
FUN, COME ALONG WITH ME â€



â SAY, HEY, GOOD LOOKIN'

â WHATCHA GOT COOKIN'?

â HOW'S ABOUT COOKIN'  
SOMETHING UP WITH ME? â

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

NARRATOR: IN 1951,  
WHEN MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

STAGED A HUGE HOMECOMING  
FOR THEIR FAVORITE SON,

9,000 PEOPLE SHOWED UP.

THE PROGRAM INCLUDED  
THE CARTER SISTERS  
AND MOTHER MAYBELLE

WITH CHET ATKINS.

MAN: FRIENDS,  
IT'S TIME ON OUR SHOW...

NARRATOR: THAT SAME YEAR,  
THE MAKERS OF

MOTHER'S BEST FLOUR  
SAW WILLIAMS AS A DRAW  
FOR THEIR PRODUCTS,

AND HE PRE-RECORDED  
70 15-MINUTE RADIO SHOWS

FOR THEM TO DISTRIBUTE.

BESIDES HIS HITS, AND ALWAYS  
A HYMN OR GOSPEL SONG,

THE BROADCASTS OFTEN  
INCLUDED RECITATIONS

FROM AN ALTER EGO HE CREATED,  
LUKE THE DRIFTER,

WHO DISPENSED MORAL ADVICE

HANK WILLIAMS HIMSELF  
NEVER FOLLOWED.

WILLIAMS: â PRAISE THE LORD,  
I SAW THE LIGHT... â

NARRATOR: AND SOMETIMES, OVER

THE OBJECTIONS OF THE BAND,  
THE SHOWS INCLUDED VOCALS  
BY AUDREY, WHO,  
DESPITE HER LIMITED TALENT,  
SEEMED TO CRAVE THE LIMELIGHT  
THAT INCREASINGLY FOCUSED  
ONLY ON HANK.

WILLIAMS: "PRAISE  
THE LORD, I SAW THE LIGHT"

NARRATOR: THOUGH HANK  
AND AUDREY PRESENTED

A PUBLIC IMAGE OF  
A HAPPY COUPLE,

THEIR RELATIONSHIP WAS  
AS EXPLOSIVE AS EVER,

FILLED WITH FIGHTS  
AND BROKEN FURNITURE.

SHE SUSPECTED HIM  
OF CHEATING ON HER,

AND WHEN HE WAS ON THE ROAD,

HE SUSPECTED HER  
OF THE SAME THING.

KEY: THEY LOVED EACH OTHER.

I THINK THEY TRULY DID  
LOVE EACH OTHER.

BUT FOR SOME REASON,  
THEY JUST...

THEY FOUGHT A BATTLE,  
I THINK, EVERY DAY.

NARRATOR: AFTER A FEW MONTHS  
OF SOBRIETY,

HANK HAD RESUMED HIS BOUTS  
OF HEAVY DRINKING.

ONCE, WHEN AUDREY HAD  
LOCKED HIM FROM THEIR HOME,

WILLIAMS CHECKED INTO  
THE TULANE HOTEL

AND FELL ASLEEP IN HIS ROOM  
WITH A LIT CIGARETTE,

WHICH STARTED A FIRE THAT  
RESULTED IN HIM BEING ARRESTED.

OCCASIONALLY, HE TURNED  
TO MOTHER MAYBELLE.

MY MOTHER WOULD TELL ME

THAT HE WOULD COME TO THE HOUSE  
SOMETIMES, YOU KNOW,

LATE AT NIGHT AND WOULD JUST  
SIT IN THE LIVING ROOM

OR IN THE KITCHEN AREA  
AND HAVE COFFEE

AND TALK TO MAYBELLE.

CARTER: THEY WORRIED  
ABOUT HIM A LOT.

AND THEY'D TRY TO STEAL  
HIS LIQUOR, POUR IT OUT.

THERE WAS NEVER  
ANY JUDGMENT THERE.

AND HER DOOR  
WAS ALWAYS OPEN.

THERE WAS SOME CORNBREAD  
AND SOME STEW,

AND SOME PINTO BEANS WITH

A HAM HOCK IN IT,  
NO MATTER WHAT.

SHE'D FEED YOU  
AND LIFT YOU BACK UP

AND TALK TO YOU  
AND COUNSEL YOU.

SHE'D JUST LOVE ON YOU  
UNTIL YOU FELT BETTER.

NARRATOR: WILLIAMS CONTINUED  
TO POUR HIS TROUBLES

INTO HIS SONGS.

WHEN AUDREY REFUSED TO LET HIM

KISS HER ONE DAY,

HE TOLD THE CHILDREN'S  
BABYSITTER HIS WIFE HAD

A COLD, COLD HEART.

THEN HE SAT DOWN, AND IN  
AN HOUR WROTE OUT A SONG.

[APPLAUSE]

â I TRY SO HARD,  
MY DEAR, TO SHOW â

â THAT YOU'RE  
MY EVERY DREAM â

â YET YOU'RE AFRAID  
EACH THING I DO â

â IS JUST SOME EVIL SCHEME

â THE MEMORY FROM  
YOUR LONESOME PAST â

â KEEPS US SO FAR APART

â WHY CAN'T I FREE  
YOUR DOUBTFUL MIND â

â AND MELT YOUR  
COLD, COLD HEART? â

GILL: I THINK  
THERE'S SUCH BEAUTY

IN THE STORYTELLING  
AND IN THE LYRICS.

IF YOU HEAR THE WORDS,  
"WHY CAN'T I FREE  
YOUR DOUBTFUL MIND

AND MELT YOUR  
COLD, COLD HEART,"

IF THAT DOESN'T STIR  
SOMETHING UP IN YOU,

THEN WE'LL PASS.

WE'LL JUST--WE'LL JUST  
LET YOU GO ON BY.

BUT, TO ME, THAT'S AS POETIC AS  
ANYTHING YOU COULD EVER HEAR.

AND IT'S REAL.

â€” IN ANGER, UNKIND  
WORDS ARE SAID â€”

â€” THAT MAKE THE  
TEARDROPS START... â€”

NARRATOR: AS "COLD, COLD HEART"  
ROSE IN THE COUNTRY CHARTS,

MANY POPULAR ARTISTS, INCLUDING  
TONY BENNETT, PERRY COMO,

DINAH WASHINGTON,  
AND LOUIS ARMSTRONG,

RECORDED THEIR OWN VERSIONS.

STUART: IT WAS SAID  
ONE TIME THAT HIS SONGS  
COULD GO TO PLACES

THAT HE COULDN'T  
BECAUSE HE WAS SO PURE  
AS A COUNTRY BOY

AND AS A COUNTRY SINGER.

AND HIS HILLBILLY FENCE  
MIGHT HAVE STOPPED HIM,

BUT THE SONGS COULD  
GO BEYOND THE FENCE.

NARRATOR: MORE TROUBLES  
PLAGUED HIM.

HE FELL OFF A STAGE IN CANADA,

FURTHER AGGRAVATING HIS  
CHRONIC BACK PROBLEM

AND SENDING HIM TO THE HOSPITAL  
TO BE FITTED

FOR A STEEL AND LEATHER BRACE  
THAT MADE

LIFE ON THE ROAD EXCRUCIATING.

â€” THE MORE WE DRIFT  
APART... â€”

NARRATOR: OVER CHRISTMAS  
OF 1951,

HE AND AUDREY ARGUED  
AND FOUGHT FOR A WEEK.

BY NEW YEAR'S EVE, SHE HAD  
MOVED OUT WITH THE CHILDREN.

10 DAYS LATER, SHE FILED  
FOR DIVORCE...AGAIN.

â€” ...COLD HEART

[APPLAUSE]

WILLIAMS:  
â€” AND AS I WONDER...

STUART: I HEARD THIS BEAUTIFUL  
STORY ABOUT CHARLIE PARKER

ONE TIME STANDING IN FRONT OF  
THE JUKEBOX IN NEW YORK CITY

LISTENING TO COUNTRY RECORDS.

AND HIS BUDDIES WERE GOING,  
"WHAT ARE YOU DOING?"

HE SAYS, "THE STORIES, MAN,  
IT'S THE STORIES."

LEFTY FRIZZELL:  
â€” IF YOU'VE GOT THE MONEY

â€” I'VE GOT THE TIME

â€” WE'LL GO HONKY-TONKING,  
WE'LL HAVE A TIME... â€”

NARRATOR: BY 1952,  
1,200 RADIO STATIONS

IN EVERY CORNER  
OF THE NATION

WERE DEVOTING  
AT LEAST TWO HOURS

TO COUNTRY AND WESTERN MUSIC  
EVERY DAY.

HANK WILLIAMS MAY HAVE BEEN  
THE BEST-KNOWN HONKY-TONK STAR,

BUT HE WAS NOT ALONE.

TWO SINGERS FROM

THE LOUISIANA HAYRIDE,  
WEBB PIERCE AND FARON YOUNG,  
WERE HOPING TO GRADUATE  
TO THE GRAND OLE OPRY.

FRIZZELL: "THERE AIN'T  
NO USE TO TARRY"

"SO LET'S  
START OUT TONIGHT"

"WE'LL SPREAD JOY,  
OH, BOY, OH, BOY"

"AND WE'LL SPREAD IT RIGHT

"WE'LL HAVE MORE  
FUN, BABY"

"ALL THE WAY DOWN THE LINE

"IF YOU GOT THE MONEY,  
HONEY"

"I'VE GOT THE TIME...

NARRATOR: BUT OF ALL  
THE RISING HONKY-TONK STARS,

NONE WAS CHALLENGING  
HANK WILLIAMS FOR SUPREMACY

MORE THAN LEFTY FRIZZELL  
FROM CORSICANA, TEXAS,

WHO HAD GIVEN UP  
WORKING OIL RIGS

TO SING AND WRITE SONGS.

HAGGARD: A LOT OF PEOPLE  
REFER TO THAT PERIOD

AS THE PERIOD OF  
HANK AND LEFTY,

AND THE JUKEBOX  
WAS JUST FULL OF

LEFTY FRIZZELL  
AND HANK WILLIAMS.

AND IT WAS A TOSSUP  
TO WHO WAS THE HOTTEST.

HE RELEASED A SONG CALLED  
"I LOVE YOU A THOUSAND WAYS,"

AND THE BACK SIDE  
OF IT WAS CALLED

"IF YOU'VE GOT THE MONEY,  
I'VE GOT THE TIME."

BOTH OF THEM WENT ON TO BE  
COUNTRY MUSIC STANDARDS.

THE NEXT 5 RECORDS WERE  
TREATED THE SAME WAY.

THEY WERE ALL  
NUMBER-ONE SONGS.

FRIZZELL: "HONEY,  
I'VE GOT THE TIME"

NARRATOR: IN EARLY 1952,  
A NEW SONG,

"THE WILD SIDE OF LIFE,"

ROCKETED TO THE TOP OF  
THE COUNTRY AND WESTERN CHARTS.

IT WAS SUNG BY ANOTHER SINGER  
FROM TEXAS, HANK THOMPSON.

THOMPSON: "THE GLAMOUR  
OF THE GAY NIGHTLIFE  
HAS LURED YOU..."

NARRATOR: ITS MELODY  
CAME FROM THE CARTER FAMILY'S

"I'M THINKING TONIGHT  
OF MY BLUE EYES."

THOMPSON: "... AND  
LIQUOR FLOW"

"YOU GAVE UP THE ONLY ONE  
THAT EVER LOVED YOU..."

NARRATOR: IT WAS TOLD FROM  
THE POINT OF VIEW OF A HUSBAND

WHO BELIEVES  
HIS WIFE'S ATTRACTION  
TO THE LOCAL HONKY-TONK

HAS RUINED THEIR MARRIAGE.



THOMPSON: "...OF LIFE

NARRATOR:  
"THE WILD SIDE OF LIFE"

WAS STILL RISING  
IN THE CHARTS

WHEN A NEW SONG  
WITH THE SAME MELODY

CAME OUT AS A DIRECT ANSWER  
TO IT, SUNG BY KITTY WELLS.

WELLS: "AS I SIT HERE  
TONIGHT, THE JUKEBOX PLAYING "

" THE TUNE ABOUT  
THE WILD SIDE OF LIFE "

" AS I LISTEN  
TO THE WORDS... "

WOMAN: I LIKED  
THAT SONG BEING

THE ANSWER TO  
HANK THOMPSON'S SONG

BECAUSE HE HAD HAD HIS SAY,  
AND IT WAS REALLY AMAZING

THAT KITTY WOULD  
STAND UP AND HAVE HER SAY.

WELLS: "IT WASN'T GOD WHO  
MADE HONKY-TONK ANGELS "

" AS YOU SAID IN  
THE WORDS OF YOUR SONG "

" TOO MANY...

NARRATOR: "IT'S A SHAME  
ALL THE BLAME

IS ON US WOMEN," SHE SANG.

"TOO MANY TIMES MARRIED MEN  
THINK THEY'RE STILL SINGLE.

THAT'S CAUSED MANY A GOOD GIRL  
TO GO WRONG."

WELLS: " TO GO WRONG...

NARRATOR:

THE HAPPILY-MARRIED KITTY WELLS

WAS NO HONKY-TONK ANGEL.

AFTER SEVERAL UNSUCCESSFUL  
ATTEMPTS AT GOSPEL RECORDINGS,

SHE HAD AGREED TO DO  
THE NEW SONG

SIMPLY TO EARN THE SESSION FEE  
AND HAD NO EXPECTATIONS FOR IT.

BUT HER SONG STRUCK A CHORD  
IN WOMEN EVERYWHERE.

IT SOON ECLIPSED  
"THE WILD SIDE OF LIFE"

TO BECOME THE FIRST SONG  
BY A WOMAN

TO REACH THE TOP OF  
BILLBOARD'S COUNTRY  
AND WESTERN CHART.

WELLS: "IT WASN'T GOD  
WHO MADE...

WOMAN: WOMEN WERE  
SINGING SONGS FROM  
A MAN'S POINT OF VIEW.

THEY WERE SINGING WHAT MEN  
WANTED US TO SING, YOU KNOW,

THAT, "I'LL BE HERE,  
YOU CAN GO DO WHATEVER,

BUT I'LL ALWAYS  
BE HERE WAITING."

WELL, THAT WAS CHANGING,  
YOU KNOW?

WELLS: "...CAUSED  
MANY A GOOD GIRL

" TO GO WRONG

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

[NEW SONG BEGINS]

WILLIAMS:  
" THE NEWS IS OUT...

NARRATOR: AS HANK  
AND AUDREY WILLIAMS'

SECOND DIVORCE WAS FINALIZED  
IN 1952,

HE ONCE MORE TURNED  
HIS TROUBLES INTO A SONG.

WILLIAMS:  
"...OF RUNNING ROUND...

KEY: "YOU WIN AGAIN."

THAT WAS AN AUDREY SONG.

IT'S A SAD SONG, BUT IT  
REALLY TELLS A LOT

ABOUT HIS LIFE AT  
THAT POINT.

AND I THINK WHEN HE  
SPLIT WITH AUDREY,

I THINK THAT WAS THE  
BEGINNING OF THE END.

WILLIAMS:  
"THIS HEART OF MINE

" COULD NEVER SEE

NARRATOR: WILLIAMS MOVED IN  
BRIEFLY WITH RAY PRICE,

A RISING COUNTRY STAR  
WHO REMEMBERED HANK

CALLING AUDREY EVERY DAY,  
ONLY TO HAVE HER HANG UP.

WILLIAMS:  
"JUST TRUSTIN' YOU

" WAS MY GREAT SIN

" WHAT CAN I DO?

" YOU WIN AGAIN

[NEW SONG BEGINS]

" OH, PLEASE  
DON'T LET ME LOVE YOU... "

NARRATOR: HE WAS STILL WRITING

AND RECORDING HIT AFTER HIT.

WILLIAMS:

â I'M FEELING BLUE

â AND PLEASE...

NARRATOR: HIS PUBLISHER  
REPORTED THAT 89 SONGS

THAT WILLIAMS HAD  
WRITTEN WERE RECORDED

IN THE FIRST HALF  
OF 1952 ALONE.

WILLIAMS:

â YOU'LL BE UNTRUE

â BECAUSE YOU'RE SWEET...

NARRATOR: BUT HIS PHYSICAL  
CONDITION WAS DETERIORATING.

NOTHING EASED HIS  
CONSTANT BACK PAIN,

AND NOW HE ADDED A STEADY  
MIX OF DRUGS TO COMBAT IT--

AMPHETAMINES TO  
GET HIMSELF GOING,

SEDATIVES TO HELP HIM SLEEP,

SOMETIMES MORPHINE  
TO NUMB THE PAIN.

KEY: THE DRINKING  
WAS BAD ENOUGH,

BUT HE PROGRESSED  
TO OTHER THINGS.

WILLIAMS: â YOU'LL BE UNTRUE

KEY: I WENT ON  
OUT TO THE HOUSE,

AND HE CAME OUT  
IN HIS UNDERWEAR,

AND HE LOOKED LIKE  
DEATH EATING A CRACKER.

I MEAN, HE JUST...

IT WAS REALLY,  
REALLY SAD TO SEE.

NARRATOR: IN A RECORDING  
SESSION IN NASHVILLE,

WILLIAMS WAS SO WEAK,  
HE WOULD COLLAPSE

INTO A CHAIR  
TO REST BETWEEN TAKES.

AS HE FINISHED  
THE LAST SONG,

"I'LL NEVER GET OUT  
OF THIS WORLD ALIVE,"

CHET ATKINS, WHO PLAYED  
GUITAR IN THE SESSION,

REMEMBERED THINKING,  
"HOSS, YOU AIN'T JIVIN'."

ON TOUR, WILLIAMS CONTINUED  
DRAWING HUGE CROWDS,

THOUGH HE OFTEN WAS DRUNK  
OR SURLY ON STAGE

OR SIMPLY FAILED TO APPEAR.

WILLIAMS: "â€¦OUT OF  
THIS WORLD ALIVE... â€¦"

NARRATOR: IN RICHMOND,  
VIRGINIA, WITH RAY PRICE  
AS THE OPENING ACT,

HE HAD TROUBLE REMEMBERING  
THE LYRICS AND STAYING ON KEY

AND WALKED OFF  
AFTER 3 SONGS,

LEAVING PRICE  
AND THE DRIFTING COWBOYS

TO TRY TO APPEASE  
THE ANGRY CROWD.

AFTER ANOTHER RAGGED  
PERFORMANCE,

A DISGUSTED  
ROY ACUFF TOLD HIM,

"YOU'VE GOT A MILLION-DOLLAR  
VOICE AND A 10-CENT BRAIN."

WILLIAMS: "a ...STRUGGLE AND  
STRIVE, I'LL NEVER GET OUT... a"

NARRATOR: AT A CONCERT  
IN EL PASO, HE WAS  
IN SUCH BAD SHAPE

THAT MINNIE PEARL  
WAS ASKED TO STAY WITH HIM

BETWEEN PERFORMANCES  
TO MAKE SURE HE DIDN'T  
MISS THE SECOND SHOW.

SHE TRIED TO BRIGHTEN HIS MOOD  
BY SINGING "I SAW THE LIGHT."

AND HE PAUSED AND SAID,  
"MINNIE, THERE AIN'T NO LIGHT."

WILLIAMS: "a ...WORLD ALIVE

WILLIAMS, JR.:  
THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HE SAID.

"THERE AIN'T NO LIGHT  
FOR ME, MINNIE."

NOT A GOOD THOUGHT.

NARRATOR: ON AUGUST 11, 1952,  
AFTER HEARING REPORTS

THAT WILLIAMS WAS DRUNK  
DURING A SHOW IN PENNSYLVANIA,

THE MANAGER OF  
THE GRAND OLE OPRY

CALLED HIM UP AND FIRED HIM.

ON OCTOBER 19th,  
HE MARRIED 19-YEAR-OLD  
BILLIE JEAN JONES.

THE CEREMONY TOOK PLACE  
IN NEW ORLEANS

IN AS PUBLIC A MANNER  
AS POSSIBLE.

FOR TICKETS RANGING  
FROM \$1.00 TO \$2.80,

PEOPLE COULD ATTEND  
THE AFTERNOON REHEARSAL

OR THE EVENING CEREMONY,

COMPLETE WITH  
A MUSICAL PERFORMANCE.

14,000 FANS ATTENDED.

THEN WILLIAMS WENT BACK ON TOUR  
FOR THE REMAINDER OF 1952.

STUART: THOSE LAST DAYS MUST  
HAVE BEEN A PHYSICAL CHALLENGE

BECAUSE THE DISEASE OF  
ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ADDICTION,

ON TOP OF WHATEVER  
PHYSICAL AILMENTS,

AND RIDING UP AND DOWN THE ROAD  
IN A BACK SEAT OF A CAR

TO SING COUNTRY MUSIC  
WAS NOT A GLAMOROUS LIFE.

SO IT MUST HAVE BEEN JUST  
A PHYSICAL NIGHTMARE

AND A SOUL NIGHTMARE.

WILLIAMS:  
"I'M A ROLLING STONE..."

NARRATOR:  
HIS HEALTH WORSENE.

CHEST PAINS MADE IT HARD  
TO CATCH HIS BREATH.

HIS BACK HURT SO MUCH,

HE SOMETIMES LAID ON  
THE FLOORBOARD OF HIS  
TOURING CAR CRYING.

"EVERY TIME I CLOSE MY EYES,"  
HE SAID,

"I SEE JESUS COMIN' DOWN  
THE ROAD.

HE'S COMIN' AFTER OL' HANK."

WILLIAMS: "ON

THE LOST HIGHWAY... â

KEY: EVERYBODY  
WAS GRABBING AT HIM.

EVERYBODY WANTED MONEY,  
EVERYBODY WANTED THIS,  
THEY WANTED THAT.

HE HAD THE TASTE OF SUCCESS,

AND HE HAD SUCH  
A FEAR OF LOSING IT

THAT I THINK THAT JUST KEPT  
PULLING HIM AND PULLING HIM.

NARRATOR: FOR A RETAINER  
OF \$300 A WEEK,

WILLIAMS BROUGHT ON A QUACK  
DOCTOR WITH A PHONY DEGREE

WHO ADDED A NEW DRUG TO  
HANK'S BAG OF PILLS--  
CHLORAL HYDRATE,

PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS  
WHEN COMBINED WITH ALCOHOL.

WILLIAMS:  
â OH, THE DAY WE MET...

NARRATOR:  
ON DECEMBER 30, 1952,

WILLIAMS PREPARED TO LEAVE  
MONTGOMERY FOR TWO SHOWS

IN WEST VIRGINIA AND OHIO.

A FREAK WINTER STORM CANCELLED  
HIS PLANS TO FLY,

SO HE HIRED 17-YEAR-OLD  
CHARLES CARR

TO DRIVE HIM IN  
WILLIAMS' CADILLAC.

THEY STARTED LATE  
AND MADE SEVERAL STOPS

FOR WILLIAMS TO BUY BEER

AND FIND A DOCTOR WHO  
WOULD PROVIDE HIM WITH



A SHOT OF MORPHINE

BEFORE STOPPING  
FOR THE NIGHT.

ON THE 31st,  
THEY SET OUT EARLY.

HANK WAS IN GOOD SPIRITS.

AFTER BREAKFAST, HE BOUGHT  
A BOTTLE OF BOURBON

AND SANG ALONG WITH  
THE RADIO AT TIMES.

STOPPING IN CHATTANOOGA  
FOR LUNCH,

HE PLAYED TONY BENNETT'S  
VERSION OF "COLD, COLD HEART"

ON THE JUKEBOX  
AND LEFT A \$50 TIP.

WILLIAMS: "I WAS  
JUST A LAD..."

NARRATOR: IT WAS SNOWING  
WHEN THEY REACHED KNOXVILLE

AND LEARNED THAT THE FIRST SHOW,  
SCHEDULED FOR THAT NIGHT

IN CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA,  
HAD BEEN CANCELLED,

AND THEY WERE TO PROCEED  
DIRECTLY TO CANTON, OHIO.

WILLIAMS: "NOW I'M  
LOST TOO LATE..."

NARRATOR: HANK PERSUADED  
A DOCTOR TO GIVE HIM  
TWO MORE SHOTS OF MORPHINE

BEFORE THEY DEPARTED  
AT 10:45 P.M.

WILLIAMS:  
"ON THE LOST HIGHWAY..."

NARRATOR: WILLIAMS WAS LYING  
DOWN IN THE BACK SEAT,

COVERED BY HIS OVERCOAT

AND A BLANKET,  
AS THEY HEADED FOR CANTON.  
HE NEVER MADE IT.

SOMEWHERE ON THE MOUNTAIN ROADS  
BETWEEN BRISTOL, TENNESSEE

AND OAK HILL, WEST VIRGINIA,  
IN THE EARLY HOURS OF  
JANUARY 1, 1953,

HANK WILLIAMS,  
THE HILLBILLY SHAKESPEARE,

DIED IN THE BACK SEAT  
OF HIS CAR.

HE WAS 29 YEARS OLD.

[MUSIC PLAYING ON RADIO]

FOSTER: THERE WAS A RADIO  
BEHIND THE COUNTER

PLAYING A HANK WILLIAMS SONG.

SO I ORDERED MY BREAKFAST,  
AND THE DJ COMES IN

AND SAID, "WELL,  
THERE HE IS, FOLKS,

THE LATE AND  
GREAT HANK WILLIAMS."

SO, I SAID TO THE WAITRESS,  
"WHAT?

IS HANK WILLIAMS DEAD?"

AND SHE SAID, "OH, YEAH.  
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?

HE'S DEAD."

AND I WEPT.

I COULDN'T HELP IT,

'CAUSE THERE  
WAS A LOSS, MAN,

FOR ALL MANKIND, I THOUGHT.

NARRATOR: ON SUNDAY,  
JANUARY 4,

20,000 MOURNERS GATHERED

OUTSIDE MONTGOMERY'S  
MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM

FOR THE FUNERAL OF  
HANK WILLIAMS,

THE LARGEST CROWD  
IN THE CITY'S HISTORY

SINCE THE DAY JEFFERSON DAVIS  
WAS INAUGURATED

AS PRESIDENT OF THE  
CONFEDERACY IN 1861.

ONLY 2,750 COULD FIT INSIDE,

INCLUDING 200 AFRICAN  
AMERICANS WHO FILLED  
THE SEGREGATED BALCONY,

AS HIS OPEN CASKET WAS  
PLACED AT THE FOOT OF THE STAGE,

FLANKED BY FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS  
IN THE SHAPE OF A GUITAR.

ERNEST TUBB COMFORTED  
LILLIE WILLIAMS IN THE AUDIENCE,

THEN SANG A HYMN WITH  
THE DRIFTING COWBOYS.

RED FOLEY PERFORMED  
"PEACE IN THE VALLEY,"

AND ROY ACUFF  
JOINED HIM AND CARL SMITH

AND WEBB PIERCE TO SING  
"I SAW THE LIGHT,"

WHILE LITTLE JIMMY DICKENS,

JUNE CARTER, AND BILL MONROE  
SAT WITH THE CROWD.

THE SOUTHWIND SINGERS  
SANG AN OLD GOSPEL HYMN.

THEN WILLIAMS WAS LAID TO REST  
IN OAKWOOD CEMETERY.

["YOUR CHEATIN' HEART"  
PLAYING]

WILLIAMS:

â YOUR CHEATING HEART

â WILL MAKE YOU WEEP

â YOU'LL CRY AND CRY

â AND TRY TO SLEEP

â BUT SLEEP WON'T COME...

NARRATOR:

"YOUR CHEATIN' HEART,"  
RELEASED AFTER HIS DEATH,

WOULD GO ON TO BECOME ONE  
OF HIS BEST-KNOWN SONGS,

AND FOR MANY PEOPLE  
DEFINE COUNTRY MUSIC.

MAN: I LOVED HANK WILLIAMS.

WILLIAMS: â WHEN TEARS  
COME DOWN... â

MAN: HE HAD HIS HEART  
AND HIS SOUL INTO EVERY WORD.

EMOTIONALLY, IT MOVED YOU.

AND IT'S STILL THE SAME.

I STILL LOVE TO HEAR  
HIS RECORDS.

I WISH THAT HE'D LIVED  
TO BE AS OLD AS I AM,

'CAUSE I KNOW THERE WAS A LOT  
OF GREAT SONGS IN THERE.

WILLIAMS: â YOUR CHEATIN'  
HEART WILL TELL ON YOU... â

GILL: WHAT I LOVED ABOUT  
HANK WILLIAMS WERE THOSE SONGS

AND THE WAY HE MADE YOU FEEL

HOW MUCH HE MUST HAVE HURT.

WILLIAMS: â ...AND CALL

MY NAME

YOU'LL WALK THE FLOOR...

GILL: I WAS ALWAYS DRAWN TO  
THE MELANCHOLY ONES

MORE THAN THE FUN ONES--

"YOUR CHEATIN' HEART,"  
"I'M SO LONESOME I COULD CRY."

WILLIAMS:  
...WILL TELL ON YOU

YOU CAN'T SAY IT  
ANY MORE PLAIN

OR ANY MORE POETIC  
THAN "I'M SO LONESOME  
I COULD CRY."

WILLIAMS: HEAR THAT  
LONESOME WHIP-POOR-WILL

HE SOUNDS TOO BLUE TO FLY

OH, THE MIDNIGHT TRAIN  
IS WHINING LOW

I'M SO LONESOME I COULD CRY

WILLIAMS: I'VE NEVER SEEN  
A NIGHT SO LONG

WHEN TIME GOES  
CRAWLIN' BY

THE MOON JUST WENT  
BEHIND THE CLOUDS

TO HIDE ITS FACE  
AND CRY

NARRATOR: NEXT TIME  
ON "COUNTRY MUSIC"...

BOBBY BRADDOCK: THERE WAS  
A SAYING--"THE BLUES HAD A BABY

AND THEY CALLED IT ROCK  
AND ROLL"--AND I ALWAYS SAID,

"YEAH, AND I THINK THE DADDY  
WAS THE HILLBILLY."

NARRATOR: TWO NEW CAREERS

ARE LAUNCHED IN MEMPHIS...

MARTY STUART: WHEN IT COMES  
TO MUSIC, MEMPHIS HAS ALWAYS  
HAD A LITTLE MORE SOUL.

IT'S IN THE GUMBO DOWN THERE.

NARRATOR: AND TWO LEGENDARY  
WOMEN COME TO NASHVILLE...

TRISHA YEARWOOD:  
WHEN YOU HEAR HER SING,

YOU FEEL THE EMOTION  
IN EVERY LYRIC.

NARRATOR: WHEN "COUNTRY MUSIC"  
CONTINUES.

PATSY CLINE:  
"I GO OUT WALKIN'...

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OF COUNTRY MUSIC,

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â€”

â€”

â€” THE SILENCE OF

A FALLEN STAR

LIGHTS UP A PURPLE SKY

AND AS I WONDER  
WHERE YOU ARE

I'M SO LONESOME  
I COULD CRY